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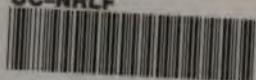
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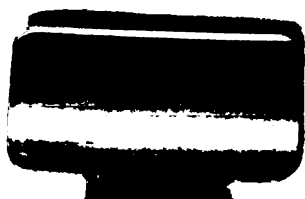
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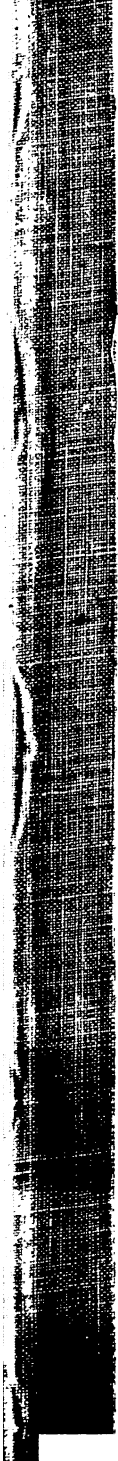
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THE

YOUNG PRIMA DONNA:

A ROMANCE OF THE OPERA.

BY MRS. GREY.

AUTHOR OF "THE DUKE."

"Early bright, transient, chaste, as morning dew,
She sparkled, was exhaled, and went to Heaven.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

YOUNG PRIMA DONNA.

CHAPTER I.

- I AM an old man, and old more from infirmities than years. Sickness and time, however, though they have robbed me of many blessings have left my memory fresh and green, as in the days of my childhood. To this I am indebted for almost the only amusement that remains to me. I sit and ruminate upon the days that are gone, and although these recollections are often fraught with agonizing sorrow I dwell upon them with a degree of tenacity, which shows how indelibly their memory is engraven on my heart.

To forget or to remember, at pleasure, is equally beyond the power of man. Sometimes I wish I could forget;—perhaps it is better as it is.

“ Let fate do her worst, there are moments of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy,
Which come in the night time of sorrow and care,
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.

Long, long be my heart with such memories filled,
Like a vase in which roses have once been distilled,
You may break—you may ruin the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.”

It is one of the melancholy pleasures of declining life, to recollect every circumstance concerning departed friends, whose beloved forms we can no longer see. In these serious moments of reflection, how relieving is the thought—what cordial balm to the heart, to know that the separation is only temporary—not eternal—that there is a time to come of reunion with those, with whom our happiest days on earth were spent. When the short dream of life is over—when the dismal phantoms shall vanish at the brightness of the everlasting day.

“ Then shall no fate again divide the souls,
Which nature thou didst for each other form.”

My solitary hours have lately been enlivened by the occasional society of a kind friend who passes every unemployed evening with me. To him, with all the garrulity of old age, I have unburdened my mind, by relating many a story of by-gone days; and so interested has he been, in the narration of some of them, that he has persuaded me to allow him to transcribe my words. Thence is the origin of the present tale, which, from his importunity, I have been tempted to bring from the depths of an old man's memory.

I am by profession a clergyman; but a morbid feeling of the necessity of locomotion, prevented my ever becoming a steady performer of my clerical duties. I wandered far and near, and France, and the other European countries, I was for ever visiting.

However, it did happen that, for a few brief years, I was stationary:—perhaps I might have continued so for the rest of my life, but circumstances proved adverse to this event. I had accepted a curacy in a peaceful happy spot, and soon became so fond of it, and of the inhabitants of the *locale*, that I could have ended my days amongst them; but my rector dying—after some of the happiest years I ever spent—I was obliged to give up the curacy and again resumed my life of pilgrimage.

It was during the period to which I have just alluded, that I became acquainted with the loved being who is to be the heroine of my tale.

My parsonage was situated almost within the walls of the park, belonging to the Marquis of Belmont. It was a sweet picturesque little spot, possessing all the advantages which stately woods, and magnificent scenery afford.

My memory dwells for ever on that beauteous home, which, for a brief space, I could call my own. My garden in all the luxuriance of summer charms!—Methinks I can even smell the perfume of my favourite flowers, when in the early morning I sallied forth to greet my treasures. Oh! memory—memory! how it lingers over every cherished spot and nook of this, to me, almost a paradise! During the course of my wandering life, these were my only days of tranquil happiness:—they were as fleeting, as they were sweet.

The Marquis and his children were excellent people, and the young and rising family were ever to me objects of interest and admiration. The Village of Fairbourne was a pattern of neatness and comfort. The inhabitants, for the most part, an industrious and artless race, and most solicitous did I feel, both for their spiritual and temporal welfare.

There was one little white cottage, standing rather apart from the rest of the houses, and surrounded by a small garden, which had been for some time unoccupied. One morning, however, on my walking through the village, I perceived an unusual degree of bustle, within its hitherto untenanted walls. The windows were all open, and the noise of scrubbing brushes was heard in every direction. I was still standing with a degree of inquisitive speculation, intending to make some inquiries upon the subject, when a cart drove up, laden with furniture belonging to the new tenant.

I had been away for a fortnight, therefore had heard none of the village gossip; so I stepped into *the shop, par excellence*, in order to gain every informa-

tion concerning my new parishioner. I was told that the expected inhabitant of the white cottage was the widow of an officer, left with one little girl, and that her name was Elton.

"She seems but poor in plight, Sir," said the grocer, "for I hear that her husband was killed in battle, and has left her with no other provision but her pension; however, she has the cottage for next to nothing, and as this is a cheap place for living, perhaps she may be able to get on. The cottage is certainly a poor abode, if she has seen better days."

I returned home this day full of the white cottage and the widow lady, conjuring up all sorts of romantic visions with regard to her, and her situation. She arrived in the course of the week, and I, in due time, paid her my pastoral visit, but as usual was disappointed.

Mrs. Elton was a common place sort of woman, about thirty-five years old, full of cares and perplexities, which rendered her cross and fidgetty, and evidently possessing very little self-possession, or arrangement. Her cottage, however, was already put into decent order.

On my complimenting her upon the activity she displayed, in so soon giving a home appearance to her new abode, she replied:—"Oh, Sir! I have had nothing to do with it. I have neither the spirits nor the strength to exert myself. I can do little else than sit and cry over my misfortunes; it has all been done by Rosalie and her nurse."

Then it was Rosalie that I was anxious to see; but on my requesting to be introduced to the young lady, her mother told me that most probably she was not fit to be seen, and that I must excuse her appearing that day, for though she was a good girl, she was seldom a very tidy one, and now that she had so much to do, she was not presentable.

"In her poor father's life-time," Mrs. Elton continued, "some pains were taken with her education; and when we were abroad, she had the benefit of

masters; but now I suppose she must give up every thing, and just turn into a mere household drudge. I am sure," she added, wimpering, "I can do nothing for her."

The young lady's scruples were not as great as those of her mamma, for scarcely had she thus spoken, when the door opened, and in she walked.

I must allow that she was not strictly neat in her appearance: her clothes were soiled, and she was evidently heated by household exertions—but there was something in the countenance of the little girl, as she stopped short, confused and blushing, at the door—confounded by the unexpected sight of a stranger, and by her mother's reprehensive looks, which went directly to my heart. Not that beauty was her recommendation, for at this time, Rosalie had very little.

She was a short girl of ten years old, with a remarkably sallow complexion; however, the vivid blush with which she greeted me, brightened her skin, and showed to the greatest advantage, a pair of—certainly—the most magnificent eyes I had ever beheld. In a moment afterwards, the blush had faded, and the complexion resumed its swarthinness;—without its assistance, the eyes lost all their splendour.

Mrs. Elton rebuked the little girl for her abrupt entrance, and ordered her to leave the room. She would have obeyed immediately had not I taken hold of one of her—I must allow—*dirty* small hands; and drawn her towards me. This simple action was the foundation of our farther friendship. Rosalie seemed gratified, for she turned her large eyes upon me with a look of affection, which I remember at this moment, and leant caressingly against me whilst I spoke to her.

We very soon became acquainted, and I went home, filled with a degree of interest for my newly acquired young friend, which I felt would be both strong and lasting.

The next morning, as I was walking through the vil-

lage, my thoughts reverted to my little acquaintance, and I sallied towards the garden-gate, merely to look over it, in the hope of gaining a sight of her black eyes.

I saw her at a short distance, up to her ears in soil and dirt, busily digging a flower-bed; but my steps were riveted to the spot on which I stood, and my surprised senses listened to a strain of melody—as unexpected as it was beautiful.

Notwithstanding her laborious occupation, Rosalie was singing an Italian air from one of Rossini's operas, and so splendid was the voice, and so extraordinary the execution, that I, who from my long residence in Italy—the land of song—am a passionate lover of music, was enchanted beyond the power of description.

I listened until she suddenly broke off the strain in the midst of a beautiful cadence; her attention was attracted by the sight of a large worm which she had disturbed during her labours, and whose progress she was now watching with infantile delight. What a contrast between her child-like actions, and the extraordinary science her voice exhibited! I opened the gate, and walked towards her. She was delighted to see me, and unrestrained by the presence of her mother, chattered on with childish freedom.

I soon discovered all her wants and wishes. She was very fond of flowers, but her present garden was quite uncultivated. I found that two or three days' labour would set it all to rights, and promised to send a man to perform the task—and plants and seeds.

Rosalie's face beamed with delight at the anticipation of her expected treasures.

"Thank you—thank you a thousand times, dear good Sir," she exclaimed, in an ecstasy of joy and gratitude.

"But I expect to be repaid, Rosalie," I said. Her countenance fell.

"What have I to give? Not one flower—nothing in the world."

"Yes, you have; you must sing to me just such another song, as I heard you so sweetly warbling whilst I stood at the gate."

"Oh! if that is all," she exclaimed, joyfully, "I will repay you to the very extent of your wishes. What shall it be?"

She then seated herself upon a broken bench. "Sit down by me," she said, "and I will sing to you as long as you please."

And she did sing; and so beautifully, that my curiosity, as well as my admiration, was excited.

"And where did you learn this?" I asked, after she had finished.

"Oh!" she replied, "I have sung ever since I was born." She added, with a deep sigh, "my poor father doated upon music—he was an excellent performer, and took great pains with me. Then, abroad, I went very often to the opera, and we saw a good deal of professional people, who liked to hear me sing, and taught me the fine songs I have just been singing. But I know some English airs if you like them better"—and then she commenced that beautiful ditty, "Auld Robin Gray."

Can I ever forget that clear young voice—those tones of native melody?

No!—at this moment, though years have passed by, their sounds still ring in my ears. I feel, indeed, that they were angelic strains, and I indulge in the hope that I shall hear them again. The lips from which they proceeded are cold in death. Although that voice of melody is now mute—in heaven, it is my cherished idea—my dearest hope, that my sweet young friend may be one of the choir of angels who sing eternal praises at the throne of God! May I, through the merits of His Son, meet her hereafter in those realms of peace!

CHAPTER II.

It was the month of May; the Marquis's family were in London, and not expected to return to the country until August. Before this period my acquaintance with Rosalie had deepened into extreme intimacy. I soon discovered her family history. Her mother—a great beauty, though penniless—had married Mr. Elton, then a lieutenant in a marching regiment, with no other income but his pay. She had been abroad with her husband, who, having there attained the rank of captain, fell in an engagement, leaving his widow and child almost destitute. By the assistance of some friends, she was enabled to return to England, and to furnish the cottage in which she was now residing, where, upon a scanty pittance, she believed she was doomed to pass the rest of her life. She was accompanied by one female servant, a soldier's wife, whose husband had perished on the field of glory. She had nursed the little Rosalie from her birth; and from the firm mind of this good woman, the child had gained all the excellence which she afterwards displayed. I found the little girl almost totally uneducated, but anxious, beyond all measure, to learn. My plan was soon arranged; she was to come to me every morning, and I was to be her instructor. These were pleasant hours to me; her quickness was incredible, and my zeal in teaching equally great.

Education, when it works upon a superior mind, draws out to view every talent and perfection;—personal virtue displays its greatness—the sentiments become generous—the manners endearing—it gives a polish to every action. Rosalie improved every day; her manners softened; even her countenance increased

in expression, for, before we met, the poor child had many disadvantages against which to struggle. Her mother's temper was capricious and unamiable, and I soon discovered that she was both ignorant and silly. Rosalie had never been properly managed, so no wonder that the seeds of evil, as well as of good had been implanted in her nature;—those of evil were but of fragile growth—the soil from which they sprung was too rich and good to nurture them, and every day I witnessed new perfections in my little pupil.

The autumn came, and with the season the family of the Park arrived to gladden every heart. The party consisted of a great many children, of all ages, from babies, to youths of fifteen and sixteen. They were a charming group!

The Marchioness was an excellent, kind-hearted woman; unspoilt by prosperity and the world—her tastes were simple. She, as well as her noble husband, loved the country and unostentatious pursuits, and were both desirous that their children should do the same. Their return to Belmont Abbey was hailed with joy by every class.

The countenances of the young people were open and beautiful, with an expression of high-breeding, at the same time full of affability and cheerfulness. The youths of the family were tall and gracefully made, and their whole appearance natural and easy.

As an admired author expresses himself, "There is a healthful hardiness about real dignity, that never dreads contact and communion with others, however humble;—it is only spurious pride that is morbid and sensitive." The young ladies delighted to stop and talk to the poor people of the village—to notice the children, and hear the story of the humble cottagers. I loved them all, and their return was, ever to me, a gala day.

I now hoped that I had prepared for them a pleasant surprise. We had always been very proud of our little village choir; it had been one of my most favourite hobbies, and I had been assisted, very assi-

duously, by the young ladies and their governess—a German, who possessed great musical abilities. Now, I had indeed, gained a powerful auxiliary! Rosalie practised hard to produce an effect, and was to introduce a solo for the first Sunday's anthem. Her strong *contralto* voice was beautifully adapted to church music. It was thus I intended to present my little *protégée* to this illustrious family.

Saturday arrived, and the whole aspect of the place was brightened by the presence of its noble owners. The next day, as usual, the whole household joyfully attended my little church.

My heart beat high at the moment the music commenced, when Rosalie appeared in front of the gallery, and chaunted forth, with the utmost sweetness and skill, that beautiful sacred song of Pergolesi's, "Lord! have mercy upon me!" She was ably accompanied by our organist, a young beginner of some science.

My eyes, for a moment, fell upon the countenances of the occupants of the Belmont pew, and I saw with satisfaction, that admiration, surprise, and delight beamed from them. Certainly, nothing could well surpass the beauty of the voice of the little *cantatrice*, and, although far from lovely, her childish appearance and sweet countenance were passports which found their way into the hearts of all who heard her.

From this moment Rosalie might date the happiness, which flowed with a rich current, during the five ensuing years of her life—days, indeed, of joy to her, sweet soul! although their brilliancy, perhaps, rendered those that followed but the more dark and dismal.

In the bitterness of my feelings I sometimes blame myself; but still the firm reliance that God directs our every effort must solace me; and the conviction that he often "chasteneth whom he loveth," is my support, when self-reproach wrings my heart, and I bow my head in humility to his dispensations. His consolations are the only true ones; and now I comfort myself by thinking, that all the sorrows she felt in this world,

have been but thorns in her passage to that eternal state, in which, I reverentially trust, she is far happier than we who are still on earth.

Rosalie became almost domesticated at the Abbey. The family were all enthusiasts upon the subject of music, and this circumstance, in the first instance, made them patronize the little singer. The German, governess, Mademoiselle Kramer, was too happy to assist in cultivating such splendid talent; and the English instructress willingly lent her aid to perfect her in other branches of education. I, also continued my lessons, therefore our little girl did not lack tuition; and Mademoiselle Kramer and I had soon settled in our own minds, that Rosalie was to be brought up in such a manner, as would fit her for a first-rate governess.

She soon became a universal favourite throughout the whole house; her sweet temper and lively disposition, made her equally acceptable in the nursery, school-room, and drawing-room. The little ones clung round her with infantine love, and the elder children prized her for her acquirements and excellent qualities.

Lord and Lady Belmont felt much interest for Rosalie, and considered her society an advantage to their daughters, as she was too happy to impart to them all she could, of the talent she possessed to so brilliant a degree. And the boys—though they sometimes laughed at her, and called her “Rose, Rose! coal black Rose,” and quizzed her little squat figure—still, they were not happy without her; and when they returned home for their vacations, “Where is the yellow rose?” was the first question they asked, if they did not see her immediately on their arrival.

The eldest son, Lord Fitz-Ernest, was a charming youth. He was ever the kind friend of our little heroine; he always called her by her own pretty name, and, in the mischievous pranks of his brothers, which were often aimed to tease and torment “the dark lit-

the Rose," she had invariably found a supporter in him.

He was passionately fond of music, and, in her labours of practising, to give him pleasure was her greatest aim. On his return to his home, how charmed was she to exhibit before him all her new songs, and the improvement she had made in his absence!—to hear his praise had been her hope during all her exertions to attain perfection in the science.

This was, indeed, a luxurious life for Rosalie, for many months, at least, in the year. The rest of the time she spent ostensibly with her mother, although, during the greater part of the day, she was to be seen at the rectory.

Mrs. Elton was any thing but an intellectual companion for her daughter. She had been accustomed to a life of gaiety and variety, and now, completely thrown upon her own resources, was for ever whining and bewailing her condition. She was jealous of the situation her daughter held at the Abbey, for Lady Belmont did not extend much of her notice to her. She was too vulgar-minded to meet with much reciprocity of sentiment from the refined members of Belmont Abbey.

They were, however, attentive to her wants, and she was liberally supplied with temporal civilities. The gamekeeper had orders never to forget her; the Abbey garden afforded her fruit and vegetables; but Mrs. Elton was never satisfied. To live in a town was her ambition, where she might have gossip and tea parties in abundance. Nothing kept her in our village but my remonstrances, and frequent endeavours to impress upon her mind, the advantages which a residence there afforded her daughter. The time, to her, passed slowly and heavily; her temper became fretful, and her ennui almost insupportable.

CHAPTER III.

We will pass over a lapse of time—several years—which glided by in quick and happy succession. Rosalie increased in wisdom, but slowly in stature. Perhaps it was to her diminutive figure she owed a great deal of the indulgence she received throughout the whole of the Belmont family. Although almost fifteen she looked a complete child. Had she attained the growth of others of her own age, it might have entered the Marchioness's head, that such a fascinating and accomplished girl, would be rather a dangerous companion for her sons, some of whom were nearly grown up. As it was, Rosalie still continued their little pet and plaything.

Never did they return home without bringing with them some token, which showed that they remembered her, even when absent. Lord Fitz-Ernest evinced towards her, perhaps, the greatest share of good will; he was older than his brothers, and of a graver and more sensitive disposition. He could not bear to see his little *protégée* for a moment mortified; therefore, in all their parties of pleasure, he took care that Rosalie should be included. He saw that she was provided with a pony, which best suited her—or if a carriage excursion was in question, she must be squeezed in—even if there was no other seat than his knee.

“My dear Fitz-Ernest,” I once heard Lady Belmont say, “I fear we are almost spoiling that child; placing her in a false position, at least in one unfitting her for what is to be her fate hereafter, for her situation in society. Poor little thing! in a very few years—for we forget her age—she must commence the wearisome *métier* of governess. All we are now doing for her—making her so happy, and upon such a complete

equality with your sisters, will, I almost think, cause her to enter her vocation with disgust."

"But she is still such a baby," replied the young man; "it must be a very long time before her misfortunes commence."

"I beg your pardon, you forget that she is nearly fifteen."

"Fifteen," exclaimed Fitz-Ernest laughing, "she is more like a child of nine years old. I am sadly afraid our coal black Rose, as Henry calls her, will never make a dignified *institutrice*. Fancy that brat teaching the young ideas how to shoot! Not that she lacks them herself, for she's a clever little thing."

And at the same moment seeing her upon the lawn, he rushed out of the open window, and soon was seen engaged in a game of romps, with her and his sisters.

I must particularly mention Lady Gertrude. This sweet girl was about the age of Rosalie, but most unlike her in personal appearance. She was tall, exquisitely fair, and beautiful. She had ever evinced the greatest affection for our heroine. All the sisters loved her, but none with the tenderness of the lovely Gertrude; to her she looked up with a feeling approaching to adoration. She was Rosalie's *beau-idéal* of earthly perfection. To see the two girls together, no one would have guessed that their ages were so nearly alike: Lady Gertrude looked the woman, Rosalie the child. This sweet young lady was so kind, so fond of her, so anxious for her improvement—for her happiness, that could she have had it all her own way, they would never have been separated. She often importuned her mother to allow Rose to accompany them to London, but Lady Belmont thought it would be hard upon Mrs. Elton, and would not comply with this desire.

During the course of this summer, Belmont Abbey was destined to receive a visit from royalty, and we were to have nothing but fêtes and grand doings. To these festive days, the young people looked forward with great delight. Poor Rosalie! little did she dream how deeply her fate was involved in the events which this

visit produced!—Her race of happiness was almost run—the whole aspect of her situation was about to change.

Amongst the various amusements provided for the illustrious guest, some professional people were engaged to perform, during the evenings. Rosalie, whose voice improved every year, was also to take her part. Anxiously and arduously had she worked, to do honour to the instructions she had received under the roof of her benefactors. Mademoiselle Kramer was most proud of her pupil, and longed to exhibit her almost as a rival to some of the *artistes*. She forgot how richly Rosalie had been gifted by nature, and fancied she owed every thing to her skill in teaching, which was in truth very great. Laboriously did she make the little girl practice, both vocal and instrumental music, before the expected arrival. Had she guessed what were to be the results of all this perfection, how mute would have been her voice!—how inflexible her fingers!

Rosalie was in a state of great nervous excitement during this period, and I did not think that she was in good spirits. She appeared over-worked and worried. She came to me as usual at the rectory, but our lessons did not proceed as calmly as they were wont to do.

“I wish this visit was over,” she said to me one morning, “I dare not express how I dread it, for Mademoiselle Kramer would imagine that I meant to fail in my performance—and that would half kill her. But these Italian people! the very idea of them terrifies me. It appears so like presumption to put myself in competition with them. Who will listen to my voice when they are present? and if you could but imagine, my dear Sir, how I dislike exhibiting before strangers! for my friends I could sing for ever; but, for display only, I dread it.”

I tried to reassure her, but she shed tears, and was totally unlike her own merry self. Was it a *presentiment* of evil that made her thus sad? The expected

moment arrived—the prince and his *suite* were at the Abbey; all was festive gaiety. A concert was prepared for him that evening. I shall never forget my surprise at Rosalie's appearance. It had been the fashion, to consider her almost ugly; I had never been of that opinion. Her eyes every one allowed were splendid, and her countenance was sweet; her complexion had always been the bane of her beauty, but when it was lighted up by colour, every feature appeared to soften, and many a time I looked at her, and inwardly predicted to myself, with a sigh of regret, that the time would arrive when Rosalie would be too beautiful for the situation she was to hold in life.

This evening Mademoiselle Kramer, assisted by Lady Gertrude, had taken peculiar pains with her *toilette*. Her long black hair was smoothed and plaited in a most becoming manner, and she wore a pretty white dress, made by the direction of her anxious friend. Just as she was on the point of entering the drawing-room with the young ladies of the family, Fitz-Ernest called to her:

"Come into my sitting-room, Rosy," he said; she obeyed the summons with alacrity.

"Upon my word," he continued, "you look quite pretty;" and he turned her round and round, much to her amusement, although she blushed, and added to the prettiness which for the first time, struck his eye. "See what I have got for a good girl. This is to bribe you to do your best and enchant every one, and make all the *Signors* and *Signoras* die with envy;" and at the same moment he put around her neck a beautiful gold chain, from which was suspended an ornament containing Lady Gertrude's hair.

Tears started into the eyes of the grateful child, and in an instant her arms were thrown round the neck of the young Lord, whom she embraced with all the innocence of the merest baby.

"Come, come," he said, laughing at this tender demonstration of her thanks, although he returned her caresses with brotherly tenderness, "we must have

no scene, for your eyes will be red, and then what will become of your good looks? You know, Rosalie, your eyes are your fortune."

Rosalie had not known this before; but she remembered his saying for the future.

Lord Fitz-Ernest then led her into the music-room, and placed her by the side of his sister Gertrude. The varied emotions of joy and anxiety which agitated her bosom, had lent the brightest blood to her complexion, and when, at length, she took her place by the pianoforte, and accompanied by Mademoiselle Kramer, sang an Italian song, there was a general exclamation throughout the room of "What a beautiful child!"

The professional people were all delighted—astonished; real talent is always appreciated by those who themselves possess it. Her poor little head might have been turned by the excessive praise she received, but Rosalie fixed her eyes on the countenances of the Marchioness, Lady Gertrude, Fitz-Ernest, and then upon me; she saw that we were more than satisfied, and all the noisy flattery of the Italians fell valueless upon her ears.

There was one man amongst the set, who appeared peculiarly surprised and charmed with the voice and talent of Rosalie; he was the principal performer. At first, he imagined that she was one of the children of the house, but when he heard from Mademoiselle, her actual position in the family, his curiosity and admiration appeared to redouble. He listened to her with the utmost eagerness, and his questions with regard to her, were endless. He seemed to wish to know her whole history, and during his stay at Belmont made her sing to him repeatedly, trying her voice, in every possible manner. Mademoiselle Kramer was in perfect raptures, and readily supplied him with every information he required.

There was something about this man that I never could endure. His countenance displayed a mixture of slyness and servility, although his manners were

polished, and fascinating, like those of most foreigners.

I was surprised one day, as I passed through the village, by seeing him come out of Mrs. Elton's cottage, and I fancied he looked confused when he encountered me; but with the usual ease of those foreign puppies, he promptly said: "*Qu'il venait d'entrer dans cette jolie maisonnette pour faire ses compliments à la mère de cette charmante petite, dont la belle voix l'avait tant ravi, et pour la féliciter sur les talents surprenants qu'elle annonçait.*"

"Intrusive puppy!" I muttered to myself, angry and disgusted—I scarce knew why.

The children of the family had always been very fond of theatrical amusements. To please them, their parents had fitted up a room as a small theatre, and during the long winter evenings, this was the most favourite recreation. The exhibition had ever been restricted to their parents and intimate friends; but by some chance, the existence of this little theatre was discovered by the Duke of ———. One of the characteristics of our Royal Family, is their excessive kindness towards young people, and their fondness for children. To give them pleasure as well as at the same time to gratify himself, His Royal Highness was most anxious and solicitous in his request, that he might witness a performance. How could a wish, which from such a quarter amounted to a command, be refused? The children were soon all in a state of happy excitement and preparation. Unfortunately, for her future prospects, our little heroine was the *Prima Donna* on every occasion, for she had an extraordinary talent for acting. The piece they selected, gave her an opportunity of introducing several of her most beautiful songs.

Although Rosalie's figure and appearance were not exactly suited to the characters they chose for her, still the advantages of dress, and the borrowed embellishments of which actors and actresses feel themselves entitled to make use, improved her beauty, and

rendered her a very pretty, though certainly a *petite* performer. The exertions of the *corps dramatique* were crowned with the most perfect success. The Prince was peculiarly struck with the talent and grace of little Rosalie, and, indeed, the whole of the audience were unanimous in the expressions of their delight and praise; amongst them were the Italian singers. How was it that their praises sounded so harshly upon my ears, and that for the first time, in my own mind, I highly condemned an amusement, which before I had even applauded and encouraged?

I was angry with myself, and felt that I had been guilty of impropriety, in not having, as the spiritual adviser of the family, checked it from the first; at least, I ought not to have given the sanction of my countenance to a pastime so calculated to engender feelings of variety and folly. I watched, with sensations of anger and disgust, the countenances of the foreigners, particularly that of Signor Gabrielli, who was my aversion.

His raptures at the acting of Rosalie were unbounded; he watched her every movement, and I heard him whispering in Italian continual remarks to one of his party who stood near him. "*Che voce divina!—quella ragazza sarebbe una veragioja pel nostro teatro!*" Then he lowered his voice, and went on gesticulating with great vehemence and rapidity; and then his eyes were again fixed upon the little girl, who, excited by the success she had attained, was in the highest spirits—exerting herself to the very utmost to please.

I never before felt so little inclined to encourage her. I turned away from the scene, filled with feelings of dread and gloom, which I could scarcely fathom.

"Was this," I thought, "a proper education for a girl, whose prospects in life were to be so secluded—so quiet? Had we not taken her from her own sphere—dragged her, in a most unnecessary manner, before the public eye; would it not be a disadvantage to her, when appearing as she would do in a few years, in

the grave character of a governess?" And then when I reflected upon some of the whispered hints of the Italian, I felt an inward thrill of vexation and fear.

My sweet little innocent child! surely her silly mother would never be induced to alter her views with regard to her, and allow her to fall into other hands than ours!

This idea was too disagreeable for me to cherish, and I endeavoured to banish it immediately; however, I felt much relieved when I saw the whole train depart, for there was something about the business that I certainly did not like. Whether I was afraid that the mind of my little girl would be distracted, by all the fulsome praise she received, or that I had an instinctive dread of the Italian *coterie*, I know not, but I remember that I drew my breath more freely when I found that they were all gone, and fondly imagined that the evil, with which some vague misgivings made me believe their presence was fraught, had departed with them.



CHAPTER IV.

A FEW mornings after these events had taken place, I received two letters;—they both contained fatal tidings to me. I was no longer Curate of Fairbourne. The rector was dead, and the living (which, strange to say, did not belong to the Belmont family,) was to devolve into the hands of a person who intended to reside upon it. This event had ever been like the sword of Damocles hanging over my head; however, as the late incumbent was not an older man than myself, I had lived in the hope that I might be the first to depart, that I should have ended my days at that loved retreat, and have been buried under the peace-

ful shade of the yew trees which grew in sober luxuriance in the church-yard,

The latter part of my wish, will, I trust, still be realized. I then felt, (and have ever continued to do so,) that my ashes would never rest so gently in any other soil; and when I die there is a little cherished nook reserved for me in that beloved spot, which is now more than ever dear and sacred to my remembrance.

The other letter contained intelligence of the death of my aged mother. I was summoned to attend her funeral; my departure would be, therefore, much hastened; but as I was to go, of what use would it have been to linger?

Shall I ever forget the grief of that brief period? I was perfectly bewildered by my own sorrow and that of those around me. As for poor Rosalie, the recollection of her despair will never leave my memory; it was indeed to her like losing a parent. I felt that she regarded me in that light, and towards her, dear soul, I truly felt the tenderest of parental affection.

I endeavoured to comfort her, promised to write to her—to return, if possible, to Fairbourne, and procure some habitation in the neighbourhood; still I could not soothe her; she clung round me, and could only falter out in broken accents:

“I know we shall never meet again—at least, not in such perfect comfort as we are now enjoying. I cannot help feeling that this is an end of every thing like happiness to me; the future seems to present itself to my mind with a frowning aspect;—without you, where shall I look for that tender support, upon which I have so long, so completely, relied? It is to you, dear, kind, friend, that I have looked up for advice—for instruction—ever since I have been in this happy village; but, when you are gone, what will become of me? I know, indeed, I feel a dire presentiment that all will go wrong with me—my mother will never remain at Fairbourne, and I shall be wretched. In-

deed, lately she has alarmed me by hints which all tend to insinuate that our days here are numbered."

The whole of the day previous to my departure, Rosalie passed with me at the rectory, endeavouring to assist me in my preparations for my long journey; but, poor little girl, her eyes were too completely blinded by tears, and her hands shook with too much emotion, to allow her to be of any use. I see her now, in my mind's eye, in an attitude of deep dejection, seated by the writing table, trying to arrange my papers, but every now and then leaning her elbows upon the table and weeping bitterly. I was nearly as much overcome as herself, and with difficulty commanded my feelings sufficiently to be able to speak words of consolation; indeed, I was thoroughly wretched. I felt that I was tearing myself away from the only spot on earth, and the only ties, besides those of kindred, which I had ever truly loved.

The evening being fine, I persuaded Rosalie to walk out with me; I thought the air would revive us both, and, indeed, I longed to visit, for the last time, some of my dearly loved haunts.

We walked for some time in silence, for we were far too unhappy to converse. My steps bent involuntarily towards the church-yard. I gazed with a parting look of affection upon the dear little edifice, where my best and most profitable hours had been spent.—I looked around; my eyes rested upon the grave-stones, and I almost envied the peaceful ashes of many a well-known and respected parishioner. Whilst I was standing in one quiet retired nook, which was shaded by a magnificent yew tree, I said to my young companion, "Here, Rosalie, I hope to be buried; I have signified my wishes in my will."

She answered, "What happiness it would be to me, if I could imagine that my remains would meet with the same blessed fate! Make me but one promise, dear Sir!" she exclaimed, seizing my hand, and looking up imploringly in my face, whilst her large eyes swam

in tears. "Promise me, that if I die before you quit this world, should you have it in your power to command the event, that you will endeavour to fulfil my earnest desire, that my body may also rest under this green sod. It would almost rob death of its most painful sting, to know that I should repose here, when all my troubles in this life are over!"

I looked at the little girl in surprise. These words were not in accordance with the usual joyous spirit of Rosalie; they grated on my ear as unnatural and prophetic. I, however, attributed them to the excitement of the moment, and endeavoured to soothe and comfort her to the best of my ability; but this was not to be accomplished, she could not be consoled.

It was so painful a period of my life, that, even now, I hate to dwell upon its recollection; it brings tears to my eyes, and tortures my very soul; it was the termination to the only really happy years I ever passed. Suffice it to say, that the next day I left my nest of peace, and many a sorrowing heart behind me; but now my subdued spirit endeavours to calm itself with the conviction, that although few, indeed, may be the lasting springs of joy which our Father in Heaven permits us here to taste—still, in our way through this desert, it is His unseen hand, that gently guides us through its troubles, to that home where our weary spirits will be at rest.

My narrative, from this period, must assume a different form, for I am not able to relate, as an eye-witness, all the details that follow; I have been assisted in my story, partly by what I have gathered from the relation of others, and partly by extracts from a journal written by Rosalie, which fell into my hands some time since. I was, however, an actor in many of the principal scenes, and, therefore, am my own historian, in many instances.

I sometimes think that my friend, who urged me to present this story to the public, has been mistaken in the idea that it will interest all, equally with himself. He has seen and known many of the *dramatis personæ*

of the narrative. His personal interest has been excited, by hearing, from my own lips, the fond praises that their virtues have excited. But I must crave pardon of the gentle reader if I am tedious, and excuse myself by saying, that I have not willingly intruded myself upon their notice.



CHAPTER V.

AFTER my departure, I found that the whole village were sorrowing for my loss. Let not my readers deem me presumptuous or an egotist, for thus openly glorifying myself; so it was, and I cannot help feeling proud that I should have held such a place, in the hearts of so many kind and excellent people.

The Belmont family felt my absence in various ways; for besides having the honour and happiness of being considered by them in the light of a most intimate friend, I was the almoner to all their charities—the promoter and executor of all their views and desires with regard to the parish of Fairbourne. They thought it would be long (if, indeed, ever,) before they could be on the same terms with the new incumbent.

But, of all the mourners, poor Rosalie was the saddest. Besides the grief of parting with me, who had loved her as a daughter, with much had the poor child to contend. Her mother had, for some time, appeared more than usually jealous of her visits to the Abbey; and, almost immediately after my departure, dark hints were thrown out by her, that soon there would be an end of all that was now going forward.

She said that “Rosalie was not to suppose that she

was always to go on leading the life of a fine lady, and to be entirely under the control of others—that she had different views for her, far more advantageous than those now offered to her. A governess, indeed! what would she get by that? It might do well enough for Rosalie individually, but it would be of little benefit to herself. No,” she added, “we must think of what will bring in the most money, for I am quite sick of living in such a dull, hugger-mugger manner in this stupid village!”

Rosalie looked at her mother with surprise, and shuddered, fearing—she knew not what. She also remarked that Mrs. Elton had lately been in the constant habit of receiving letters, which always appeared to throw her into an ecstasy of good humour. The poor child was miserable; her high spirits seemed to have completely flown.

“Rosalie,” said Lady Gertrude, as she entered, with rapid steps and joyful countenance, the little boudoir, where she generally passed her leisure hours with her friend, “cheer up, I have delightful news for you; I have been talking to mamma, and she has given me leave to tell you, that you are to go with us to London.”

Rosalie’s colour, which had risen at the commencement of this speech, quickly faded away, and, with deep sadness in her voice, she said,

“Charming, indeed, Lady Gertrude, had I the least hope of its being realized; but of this there is not the slightest chance. My mother will never allow me to go with you.”

“Oh! nonsense! Rosalie, you will see if I do not succeed; I shall go to Mrs. Elton, and not leave her, until I extort the permission we so much desire.”

Rosalie still shook her head mournfully.

“You may go; the plan is too delightful for me to put any obstacle in the way of its accomplishment, but I am quite hopeless as to your success. I cannot imagine what is hanging over my head, like a dark

cloud just ready to burst; but I am certain that my mother meditates some great change. Whatever it may be, I fear my days at Fairbourne are numbered; and if that be the case, farewell to all happiness!—my doom is sealed!”

“Do not indulge in such melancholy ideas, dear Rosalie,” exclaimed Lady Gertrude, turning almost pale, as she listened to the dark forebodings of her loved companion; “we cannot afford to lose you, and we will keep you by main force, if necessary,” she added, in a lively tone, in order, if possible, to dispel the gloom which had also taken hold of her own feelings. “We shall all be so happy in London. Only fancy the delight of your first visit to the Opera and the Ancient concert! How charmed you will be with them!—I expect we shall exist upon music this spring. I shall lose no time in going to your mother, so shall be off this moment,” and she, lovely creature, tripped away with all the light-heartedness of youth, which draws every thing down to its own happy level. She felt certain that she must gain her point.

In a few moments she arrived at the white cottage, and there found the uninteresting mother of our Rosalie. As she passed the little parlour window, Lady Gertrude perceived that she was busily employed in writing a letter; and, to the quick eye of her young visiter, it was very evident that such an occupation was no slight effort. A dictionary was open before her, also a half worn out Murray’s grammar, into which Lady Gertrude believed she had been constantly peeping, during the course of her labours.

Although in her heart, Mrs. Elton disliked the Belmont family, she looked upon every member of it with a great degree of awe; even the children were *personnages* of great importance in her eyes. She, therefore, received Lady Gertrude with much overstrained civility and obsequiousness, and with many smiles and courtesies; but when she heard the object of her mission, her countenance altered—she looked perplexed and provoked.

"She was very sorry," she said, "but it was quite out of the question, totally impossible; her plans for Rosalie, and, indeed, for herself, had changed much of late; she was not at liberty at present to say what they were; she was under a promise of secrecy to a friend; it was her duty to do as much as she could to advance the fortunes of her child; the prospect which was now open to her, was a certain provision, therefore, although she was sorry to disoblige Lady Belmont, and Lady Gertrude, still she really could not allow Rosalie to leave her just then, and, indeed," she added, putting on a very dismal ill-used countenance, "as it is, I have made many sacrifices for the sake of indulging that child; and when I think of the lonely miserable hours, I have passed since I came to this village, I only wonder how I have so long endured it; and she all the time having nothing but pleasure, and advantages from morning till night; it has been very fine for Rosalie, but very hard upon me—that every body must allow."

Lady Gertrude could scarcely command her patience; she felt so mortified and provoked; but finding that she could make no impression upon this silly, obstinate woman, she left her, filled with deep regret at the failure of her scheme, and with all sorts of fears for the future destiny of her friend. Something there certainly was in view for Rosalie; and in such hands, Lady Gertrude feared indeed, that it could be nothing advantageous for her. However, with the kindness and judgment, which directed all the actions of this sweet girl, remembering the excessive dejection of spirits under which Rosalie had laboured, ever since my departure, she determined not to make known to her the extent of her fears, and to soften Mrs. Elton's refusal, as much as possible.

Our poor little heroine, from an open window saw Lady Gertrude approach, and from her slow steps and languid air, immediately guessed that there was no hope for her. On Lady Gertrude's entering the apartment, the tears which fell from her eyes, (although she made

a strong effort to check them) confirmed her well-grounded fears.

Rosalie now had nothing left but to weep her regrets on the bosom of her friend, whose sorrow almost equalled her own.

Lady Gertrude seized the first opportunity of conferring with Lady Belmont upon the subject, and asking her advice. This kind mother was ever the repository of all the thoughts, and wishes of her children.

She participated warmly in the interest, which they all felt for Rosalie, but scarcely knew what to recommend, or what course to pursue! Mrs. Elton had certainly a right over the actions of her own child; but to satisfy the earnest entreaties of her daughter, although she felt almost an aversion to Mrs. Elton, for the vulgarity and vanity of her whole bearing, still rather than see her Gertrude unhappy, she promised that she would herself solicit, the boon so much desired—the society of Rosalie during their stay in London.

But even the Marchioness of Belmont was refused, and in a manner which precluded all hope of success.

“I have sent for you, Mademoiselle,” said Lady Belmont, one morning soon after this event had taken place, to the German governess, “to talk to you upon the subject of our joint pet and protégée, poor Rosalie. Can you at all enlighten me as to her odious mother’s views, with regard to her?”

Mademoiselle Kramer, with much concern in her manner, mentioned her perfect ignorance upon the subject.

“*En effet, Miladi,*” she continued, “*c’est une femme si désagréable, si vulgaire, et en outre si suffisante, que pour moi, je l’évite autant que possible; elle ne mérite pas de posséder une fille telle que notre aimable Rosalie.*”

“I agree with you perfectly, Mademoiselle; the poor child has been nurtured with such tenderness

and kindness amongst us all, that she will break her heart, if she is thrown into the society of vulgar, coarse-minded people. I sometimes fear, Mademoiselle, that voice of hers, which we have been cultivating with such eagerness, and pleasure, may prove her misfortune, after all. Does it ever strike you that her mother intends to bring her out as a professional singer?"

Mademoiselle Kramer shook her head, with a very sorrowful expression, but was silent.

The Marchioness proceeded :

"I should deplore such an event, for many reasons; I should hate to see the dear little girl who has been brought up, like one of our own children, enter a life of such slavery and publicity—to say nothing of the little degree of respectability, that attends the career of a public performer. However pure and excellent the individual may ever continue, the very associating, and being in continual contact with those, whose reputation is tarnished, throws a cloud, a blight over the most innocent. Perhaps you may think me severe, but with my ideas upon the subject, were Rosalie to embark in such a profession, under the guidance of so weak a mother, much as I love her, with my present opinions, I should no longer consider her a proper companion, still less a bosom friend for my daughters; and to have such a barrier placed between them, would make my gentle Gertrude truly unhappy. As a governess, although her life may be one of drudgery, and oftentimes of annoyance and *désagréments*, on the score of respectability, I deem it equal to every other; and though it may be a humbler vocation than theirs will be, still my children might ever have felt happy to call her their friend, although her fate had cast her in a more retired—more lowly sphere. I am sure, you know that such would be the case, dear Mademoiselle," continued Lady Belmont, "for I hope you are aware, that we have no friend, whom we more truly prize than yourself."

Mademoiselle, with glistening eyes, could only press the kind hand which was held out to her. She could not speak; her heart was full of love and gratitude towards her noble patroness, mingled with sorrow and care for the future prospects of her loved young pupil.

The day at length was fixed for the departure of the family. Poor Rosalie drooped like a little fading flower. Even her voice seemed gone; she could not bring forth a single note to gratify the Marquis with a parting song. If she could have felt comforted, it would have been by all the kindness of this charming family.

Lady Belmont, the day previous to leaving the Abbey, called her into her dressing-room, and after making her some useful and valuable presents of dress and books, said in the most soothing accents:—

“My dear Rosalie, you are aware that you owe a paramount duty to your mother, and of course, her will must be your law; but remember that I shall always be your friend, and ever ready to serve you to the extent of my power; so will the Marquis, and every member of our family. As for Gertrude, you know how much she loves you; therefore, do not give way to so much sorrow, my love. We have often parted before, and met again in happiness.”

“There is no more happiness for me!” exclaimed Rosalie, as she knelt before the Marchioness and buried her face on her knees; “but, dear Lady, believe me when I say, that whatever is destined to be the fate of the poor little girl your bounty and kindness have so long made the happiest of the happy—the remembrance of your generosity, your angelic goodness, will be the only bright thought—the stay of her existence.”

After a short pause, which was not interrupted by Lady Belmont, (for the agitation of Rosalie had communicated itself to her own kind heart,) she continued, looking up with clasped hands and streaming eyes:

"And I feel that the aspect of my destiny is indeed about to alter, oh! so sadly alter; do not forget me, dear kind friend, think of me with indulgence, whatever may be my fate, for however far I may be removed from you all, I shall ever remain the same in heart; the precepts I have learnt, whilst blessed by living under your influence, will preserve me virtuous, although I may be debarred for the future, from the happiness of being with you."

Lady Belmont was much affected; she raised her in her arms, and affectionately kissed the poor girl, then, leading her into the school-room, she gave her into the charge of Mademoiselle Kramer, one of her most devoted friends, requesting that she would endeavour to calm her, before she again joined Lady Gertrude, who was almost as miserable as herself.

However much we may wish to retard the dreaded moment of an impending, and certain event, it will at length appear; in vain we weep over the expectation of its arrival, and fondly struggle to retain our present happiness a little longer. The blow will fall. The wretched moment had indeed arrived to poor Rosalie, for the Belmont family were gone, and she was left in lonely misery.



CHAPTER VI.

FROM the moment of the departure of the family, Rosalie perceived that her mother was in a most extraordinary state of preparation and excitement. Her wardrobe seemed to be undergoing a complete investigation, repair, and embellishment. Some disclosure was constantly on her lips, which it cost her much difficulty to restrain. Many a faded, and once smart dress, which had not seen the light of day for

years, was taken from its place of obscurity, and the village mantua-maker's powers were put into requisition, to remodel it, if possible, according to the prevailing fashion.

Rosalie was often called upon to be umpire, upon some matter of taste, and to decide whether a pink or a blue riband, was the most becoming to the still handsome face of her mother, as a cap was about to be manufactured, after the pattern she had borrowed from one of the Abbey lady's maids.

Our heroine was all amazement at what she saw, but she was so unhappy at the moment, that she felt glad her mother had any subject to amuse her mind, and draw her attention from herself, thus enabling her to pass most of her time in the dear school-room at the Abbey.

During the absence of the family, this apartment was left open for her use. She always found a bright fire burning in the grate, and books and music, by which means she could pursue her studies, without interruption.

This was the only comfort which now remained to her, and it was with reluctance that she could tear herself away from this delightful solitude.

One day on her return home, she saw that something unusual had occurred; both Mrs. Elton and the servant were bustling about in all directions, full of business and preparation. The moment her mother perceived Rosalie, she exclaimed: "What a time you have been away this morning, child, I have been wanting you for a thousand different things; perhaps you are not aware," she continued, seating herself, looking very much heated by her exertions, and assuming a very consequential and mysterious air, "that I have for some time been expecting a visiter, and this morning's post brought me a letter, which intimates that he will be here to-night."

"A visiter!" exclaimed Rosalie, in surprise. "Who can it be?"

And her heart beat violently, and her colour rose;

for a moment, she thought it might be myself, and that my return was expected as a joyful surprise to her.

"The gentleman who is to arrive," resumed her mother, "you have before seen, and a charming person he is; much will his society enliven our solitude. Indeed," she continued looking down, and putting on an air of almost maiden bashfulness, "I trust we shall make him so happy, that he will be in no haste to leave us."

Again the thought flashed across Rosalie's mind, that it might be Fitz-Ernest, or one of his brothers, who had promised to pass a day with them at the cottage, which they had once or twice before done, during the absence of the rest of the family.

"Pray, mamma, tell me who it is," she exclaimed, impatiently.

"You recollect that delightful gentleman who was here in the autumn, during the Duke's stay at the Abbey, who was so kind, and condescending as to notice you, Rosalie, and who did you the great honour of admiring your singing."

"But which gentleman?" asked Rosalie, for praise she remembered had issued from more than one pair of lips; at that time, it flowed universally.

"Why, to tell you the truth," continued Mrs. Elton, "although the proud Marchioness did not vouchsafe to ask me to the Abbey during that period—which I always considered extremely rude—I was still fortunate enough, through the excessive politeness and attention, of one of the party, to receive some courtesy, which I think was only due to me, considering that I was the mother of the girl who was entertaining all the company. This polite gentleman visited me frequently; and most insinuating and delightful I found him."

"But who was it, mamma? Pray, pray, tell me."

"I wonder you are so stupid, as not to be able to guess at once—Signor Gabrielli, of course, that delightful, accomplished creature."

"What, that dark-looking, odious foreigner, whom dear Mr. Leslie used to dislike so very much? Oh, mamma! I hope you are only joking!"

Mrs. Elton looked most violently offended.

"Joking, indeed, Miss Rosalie, I see no joke in the matter, and I think you are extremely impertinent, thus to speak of a person to whom I am so much attached. Mr. Leslie, indeed! pretty notions to put into your head. I suppose he only admires those who are like his own prim self. He is not my pattern, I can tell you. You had better take care what you are about. You little know what is going to happen. You must be prepared to look up to Signor Gabrielli with respect; aye, and with obedience also: and now, Miss, be so good as to go and assist Johnson in preparing for our supper to-night. You've been ruined and spoilt by those proud people at the Abbey; I can tell you, you must lower yourself a peg or two if you please, before you are to get on, in the future life you are about to lead; pray, leave your pride behind, with all your lords and ladies; it will no longer be of any use to you."

Rosalie, frightened by her mother's anger and vehemence, burst into tears, and left the room immediately. She hastened to seek Johnson, the maid, of whom I believe I have already made mention as a sensible good woman; she found her busy in her preparations for a supper.

"Good Heavens, Johnson!" cried Rosalie, as pale and trembling she stood before her, "what does all this mean? Can you enlighten me as to the purport of my mother's fearful words, and the arrival of this odious Italian?"

"My dear child," replied Johnson, shaking her head, and looking very much annoyed, "I have long expected this; but until I was quite certain, I thought I had better not torment you with my fears."

"To what does all this lead?" cried poor Rosalie, in an agony of terror.

"Well," said Johnson, lowering her voice, "ever

since that man paid so many long visits here, during the Duke's stay at the Abbey, your mother has had letters from him constantly; and as far as I can discover, from the hints she has thrown out, and the various arrangements she has made, she is really going to marry him."

At this moment, Johnson cast her eyes upon Rosalie, whose pallid cheeks and closing eyes, showed that she was on the point of fainting. She took her into her arms and endeavoured to restore her.

"Poor dear child," she ejaculated, as she bathed her forehead and chafed her cold hands, "I feared it would be thus; but what could I do? There was no time left for me to break the news gently to her; the man will be here so very soon!"

Poor Rosalie was indeed in a dreadful state of agitation. With the idea of her mother's marriage, the whole train of her future wretched course of existence exhibited itself to her view. To live eternally in the society, in the power of that man, whose odious manners, and sinister countenance had disgusted, not only herself, but all those whose opinions she most valued—what degradation! what misery! She was in such a state of despair, that her sobs were uncontrollable; not all the scoldings of her mother, who was attracted to the spot, by the audible sounds of her sorrow, nor the tender soothing of her nurse, had any power to calm her. They were obliged, at length, to give up the point; and Mrs. Elton, in great anger, and with much reluctance, was forced to allow Johnson to undress her, and assist her into her bed, where she lay, poor child, subdued and overwhelmed with unavailing grief.

In the mean time, her mother was in all the delights of expectation, equipped in her regenerated finery. Signor Gabrielli at last arrived. Rosalie's absence gave them an opportunity of settling their future plans undisturbed, and in the course of a long conversation between this worthy pair, the fate of our heroine was decided. Every thing was arranged for Mrs. Elton's immediate marriage with the Italian.

To enlighten my readers as to the origin of an event, which may, perhaps, cause them some surprise, it will be necessary to state the reasons which induced Signor Gabrielli thus to encumber himself with this silly, penniless widow.

Rosalie's extraordinary talents had made the deepest impression upon his mind; in addition to the many other bad qualities, which he possessed, he was of a most sordid, avaricious turn. In the little girl, he at once discovered a mine of wealth. He had lately accepted an engagement at one of the theatres in Italy.

Calculating and cautious in the extreme, he considered that the easiest, and even the cheapest manner of getting her completely into his hands, would be by marrying Mrs. Elton. He was penetrating and shrewd, and gathered sufficient information, from what he saw and heard, to be aware, that by no other means, could he detach Rosalie from the Belmont family, by whom she was so much beloved. He gained from Mademoiselle Kramer, what were the views they had long settled with regard to her future life. He knew how powerful would be their influence—how fastidious probably were their ideas; in short, the only certain, and legitimate mode of possessing a complete dominion over her, would be to entail upon himself the encumbrance of taking a wife, in the person of her mother. He shrugged up his shoulders, took a large pinch of snuff, and was for a few minutes irresolute. "*Che Diavolo!* there is no good without a mixture of evil," thought he. However Mrs. Elton was still a handsome woman, and such a fool, that he might easily bend her to all his wishes. To gain her consent was an affair soon and easily accomplished. As I have before said, she was heartily sick of the retirement in which she lived, and the idea of exchanging it, for the delights of Italy, was indeed charming, to say nothing of the companion, that was ensured to her—one whom she considered a most handsome specimen of a man. His black bushy locks, and enormous whiskers were very imposing to her ideas; and she looked with admiration upon his hands, which, although constantly

begrimed with snuff, were covered with sparkling rings, which she longed to transfer to her own taper fingers.

She had, however, sufficient cunning, to know that the business had better be kept as quiet as possible, till nearer the period of its completion, for she foresaw great opposition to Rosalie's departure, both from herself, and the Belmont family, and well knew that it would nearly break the heart of her poor child. This knowledge, however, did not for a moment make her hesitate to immolate that child, on the shrine of her own selfish desires.

On the night of Gabrielli's arrival at the white cottage, every final arrangement was made; as soon as the marriage had taken place they were to set off, without farther delay, to Italy. A year or two of *intense* labour, Gabrielli assured Mrs. Elton, would render her daughter quite capable of becoming Prima Donna of the Italian Opera in London—that is to say, if she would only grow a little taller; and nothing could be so favourable to that desired end, as a residence in the warm climate of Italy; for considering the "*statura magnifica della signora madre*," he saw no reason, why her daughter should not inherit such an advantage.

From the success of such a scheme, what riches would pour forth! The Italian's eyes glistened, and his smile was sardonic, as in his mind's eye he calculated the treasures that he intended to accumulate, through the means of this poor fragile child; and Mrs. Elton viewing the perspective loaded with new caps and dresses, gossip, and tea parties, joined in this feeling of exultation, which beamed from the countenance of her intended.

In order that the marriage might take place, with as little publicity as possible, it was arranged that in the course of a fortnight, which would just give Mrs. Elton time to dispose of her little property at Fairbourne, she should, accompanied by Rosalie, join him in London, when, immediately after the wed-

ding, they might commence their continental expedition.

Mrs. Elton found that she had a much more difficult task to accomplish, with regard to Rosalie, than she had anticipated; she had imagined, that she would be all meekness and submission; but in the breast of Rosalie lay hitherto dormant the strongest feelings. They had scarcely, as yet, been excited, for the last five years of her short life had passed in tranquil happiness; she had been nurtured by praise and tenderness—in a degree almost spoilt. I confess with sadness, for my part, that I had the greatest share in over-indulging her; but there was something about the child so sweet—so endearing, that never had I tried her temper by one harsh word.

The next morning found our poor heroine in a state of indignant agony and distress; her spirit had not yet been subdued by sorrow, and she rebelled against her present trial. Life, she beheld for the first time in all its gloom; a dark cloud seemed to hang over it. It is but too true, that the present constitution of human nature cannot bear uninterrupted prosperity, without being in a degree enervated by it. The poisonous weeds, which spring up in that too luxurious soil, require the hand of adversity, to extirpate them; it is the experience of sorrow and distress that subdues the arrogance of our nature, and softens the innate selfishness of our hearts. Rosalie hid her face upon her pillow and wept; she *would* not leave her room; nothing could induce her to meet the odious man, whom her mother told her, she must henceforth reverence as a father.

From threats and scolding, Mrs. Elton was obliged at last to have recourse to entreaties that she would get up, and receive Signor Gabrielli with a cheerful countenance; but Rosalie was inflexible. At length her mother, in extreme anger and perplexity, with a very bad grace, gave way to her wishes, and dissembling her own feelings, made it appear to her future lord and master, that continued illness had confined

Rosalie to her chamber. Gabrielli was provoked at this intelligence; he longed again to hear her sing, to feast his eyes upon the casket, from whence was to proceed such future treasures!

Fortunately for poor Rosalie the next day the Italian was obliged to depart. After he was gone, Johnson prevailed upon her to get up, and be dressed. This good soul was shocked with the alteration which so short a space of grief had made in the countenance of her dear child. There now appeared upon it a fixed, and almost a sullen gloom. She had ceased to weep, but she spoke not.

Her mother endeavoured to make some impression upon her, by scolding her violently; but she soon saw that was not the way to move her; she then changed her tone to coaxing, and expatiated upon the advantages and delight of a journey to Italy. She spoke loudly in praise of the "charming man," who was soon to be so closely allied to them; but all she said only redoubled the agony which plainly showed itself upon the expressive features of Rosalie, and she generally concluded, by abusing her as an unnatural, stubborn, ungrateful girl, "who had no feeling for her own flesh and blood."

I suppose the torture of mind the poor child endured at this time cannot be described. She had not sufficient experience in misery, to fly to the only consolation which was offered to her—prayers and supplications to Heaven for support: she had not yet looked up to Heaven as a refuge, and, finding all on earth unstable—inconstant, she had yet to turn, in the helplessness of misery, to Him, whose ears are ever open to the prayer of the sorrowful. At that moment she had but one feeling—a burning anxiety to be with some of us. Had she known where I was, she would have sought me without delay; but she was ignorant of the actual place of my destination.

I have heard from Johnson, who supplied me with many of the details of my story, that for several days succeeding the events I have just recorded, she always found her, after long absences from the cottage, in the

church-yard, seated on a grave-stone, close to the spot we had fixed upon as our mutual burial place. She was never weeping, but there was a fixed and rigid expression in her countenance which told of an inward conflict, that must have been agonizing to endure.

In the mean time, Mrs. Elton went on in joyful preparation for their departure; at intervals, however, much irritated by the continued and alarming depression of her daughter and also by the evident disinclination which Johnson evinced to the change in their prospects. The latter had been a devoted servant to Mrs. Elton! for, although she plainly saw the foibles of her mistress, for whom she could not feel much respect—still, the love she bore the child she had nursed from its infancy, made her endure every inconvenience, and all the folly and occasional ill-humour of the mother, rather than lose sight of that dear nursling over whom she had so long watched. She did not scruple to express her opinion openly upon the subject of the approaching marriage; and so unlimited was her censure, that had not Mrs. Elton known how necessary she was to her comfort, she would, probably, have highly resented the freedom.

The time wore on rapidly, and there were but two days intervening before the one that was fixed for their departure for London.

What a moment for Rosalie! "Must I then leave thee, Paradise!" well might she have exclaimed, when she looked round upon the smiling scene, which she was about to quit, she sadly feared forever.



CHAPTER VII.

It was late in the evening, and Rosalie, who had been absent all the morning, had not yet returned.

Mrs. Elton and Johnson had been so much engaged during the day, that her non-appearance passed unheeded by them. The latter knew that at the Abbey she would be well cared for. She was a general favourite there, and the old housekeeper was as anxious about her as if she had been her own child; she overwhelmed her with attentions, particularly now that she saw her low spirited and suffering. Many a cup of warm jelly or nourishing broth, she endeavoured to force upon the poor languid-looking girl. Rosalie, to please her, tried sometimes to swallow a small portion of the dainties which the good woman had prepared with her own hands—but her appetite had completely failed her.

This evening, as I have before said, Rosalie returned not to her home;—it grew dark, and still she did not appear.

Johnson became very anxious, and her mother expressed what she felt by abusing her—as usual.

“What a tiresome, headstrong girl she has become,” she muttered; “always giving so much trouble,” she added, as she saw Johnson leave her packing, and about to depart in search of her. “We shall find her, I fear, a great plague; I wish I had never settled myself at Fairbourne—she has been quite ruined by the people here.”

In the mean time, Johnson sought the Abbey with rapid steps.

“Mrs. Smith!” she exclaimed, as she entered the housekeeper’s room, “of course, Miss Rosalie is here?”—But Mrs. Smith assured her that she had not been seen at the Abbey that day!

“Indeed,” continued the good woman, “I have had some chicken broth by the side of my fire ever since the morning, and some nice thin biscuits, to tempt the dear child to take a little nourishment; I have been quite vexed that she did not come.”

Johnson’s heart sank within her; but she instantly set out, accompanied by several of the servants, to search for Rosalie in every direction—no trace of her was to be discovered. All her usual haunts

were explored in vain; and, after hours of fruitless endeavours to find her lost child, poor Johnson returned home half distracted, with apprehension and distress.

Mrs. Elton was now in good earnest alarmed. The morning dawned, but no Rosalie appeared. In her present dilemma she thought it best to write to Gabrielli for the assistance of his advice. Even with all her conceit and ignorance, she had sufficient penetration to be aware that she should fall very short in the estimation of her admirer, if she did not bring with her a rich dower, in the person of her talented child.

But where was Rosalie all this time? Let us leave, for a short space, the inhabitants of the white cottage in all their alarm and consternation, and follow her footsteps. The day on which she was missed from Fairbourne, she had risen from her bed with a heart more than usually heavy; a sleepless night had added to the misery of her feelings, and the idea of the near approach of her departure, which was to be the commencement of her new and dreaded career, presented itself to her imagination with redoubled horror. She dressed herself hastily, and sought the fresh air; she imagined that her griefs would feel lighter under its refreshing influence. Towards the rectory she bent her steps, the first time for many a day; although the church-yard had been her favourite haunt, she always sedulously turned her eyes from encountering objects, the sight of which would recall scenes of such past happiness, that, now heart-stricken as she was, she could not view without torture. But still she must once more look upon it, and breathe a long—a last farewell; she dared not enter the gates; the new rector had taken possession of the place, and she was in no mood to encounter strangers.

Poor Rosalie!—She leant over the palings, and strained her tearful eyes by gazing upon the well-beloved spot. How fragrant was the perfume of the air, which wafted over so many of my cherished plants. A shower had just fallen—every thing was

fresh and green, with the early tint of spring. The last spring!—how happy was she then!—We were both busy with some new flower beds: there they were in rich luxuriance, and the bright colours of the plants were now blossoming for others!

What a tale of happiness did every feature of the place recall!—The open window, which disclosed the interior of the little study. Oh! how she longed to see my countenance looking from it, to greet her, as it had been ever wont to do, with the most affectionate smile of welcome! Now all was cold—silent as the grave. Long did the poor girl remain rapt in all the misery of painful contemplation, and only left, with slow and lingering steps, on perceiving some of the present occupants approaching.

She turned at once into the park, and soon found herself in the flower garden. Here her recollections were not less agonizing.—“Oh! Gertrude! Gertrude!” she exclaimed, as every object associated with the image of her sweet friend met her eye; “what would I give to behold you once more!—I must—I really must see you. I have not even heard from you lately. What is the cause of your silence? I cannot continue to exist without seeing you, if it is but for one short hour!—cost what it may—I will go to you!”

At this moment, a thought had darted across her mind. She remembered that a London coach passed through the village every day, at twelve o’clock.

“I will go to them,” she continued; “I can endure this load of wretchedness no longer without advice—with no one to tell me what I really ought to do. If they assure me that my path of duty is to submit, I will endeavour to do so; but from their lips must I hear my doom pronounced. Oh! dear Mr. Leslie, where are you?—why do you hide yourself from your poor little Rosalie?—Why are you not here to direct my steps?—to teach me to bow with submission to the trials that await me? Until I see you, my heart will remain rebellious—wrong as it may be.”

She reflected for an instant, and then hastily returned to the cottage, where, unheeded by her mother

or Johnson, she deliberately made up a small parcel, and taking with her a purse, which the kindness of Lady Belmont had well filled, again sallied forth. She knew that in the course of an hour the coach would overtake her; it stopped to water the horses at a small public house on the road-side, there she requested to be taken up, and in a very few minutes, was rolling rapidly on towards London.

It was a long and fatiguing journey, for the coach did not arrive at its place of destination until the next morning; but the excitement of Rosalie's mind was so great that she felt it not. Her sensations were of a mixed nature, but those of relief, and almost joy, predominated. To feel that she should so soon be with her beloved friends, was exquisite delight; still the remembrance of having so abruptly left her mother, caused a shadow to fall over the brightness of the prospect.

Fortunately for Rosalie, her only travelling companion was an old lady, who seemed to take a great fancy to our heroine, and perceiving how pale and exhausted she looked, insisted upon her taking some refreshment; and when they stopped at the Borough, she kindly saw her into a coach, giving, at the same time, instructions to the driver, to proceed to the mansion of Lord Belmont, which was in Piccadilly.

How long appeared the distance, until she reached the haven for which she panted! She was frightened and bewildered by this, her first introduction to the bustling, noisy city of London. At length, she was before the doors of Belmont House; she saw the well-known livery, and many a well-remembered face amongst the servants; she sprang from the coach, and was soon in the arms of her dear Lady Gertrude; there, she felt safe, and for a moment, all her former wretchedness was forgotten.

The surprise of the family, on seeing Rosalie, was very great; and when they heard her story, they were indeed perplexed, and much concerned: none of the letters which she had written to them upon the subject, had been received, and Rosalie now felt con-

vinced that her mother had intercepted her correspondence, for she discovered that they had been equally astonished, at not having heard from her, in answer to the many letters that had been despatched to Fairbourne.

Her kind friends soon perceived, that after the first glow which happiness spread over her countenance, had faded away, she was in a most exhausted and uncomfortable state; indeed, when she had stated every circumstance of her present position, the colour gradually left her cheeks, and a succession of fainting fits, alarmed and distressed all those around her. She was carried to her bed, from which she was unable to move for weeks, as her life was in great danger, from the effects of a nervous fever.

In the mean time, Lady Belmont felt that she was placed in a very embarrassing situation. Truly did she compassionate the fate of Rosalie, and to avert the evils which menaced her, she was ready to make every exertion; but she foresaw every description of difficulty. I was summoned immediately to assist the family with the aid of my advice, and I found my poor little *protégée* in a most lamentable state, both of mind and body.

How kind! how liberal were the views of all the Belmonts with regard to her. I can never forget the impression it made upon my mind, and the admiration which not only this trait in their characters excited, but I may also say, the constant tenor of their benevolent lives. They did, indeed, shed light and lustre over the sphere in which they moved. Rich is their reward in this life, in peace of conscience, in the approval of the wise and good; but glorious and transcendent will be their lot, we must humbly hope, in Heaven, on that day when the Lord "maketh up his jewels."

The Marchioness had immediately written to Mrs. Elton, to inform her of the unexpected arrival of Rosalie; but no answer did she receive to this communication, until one morning Signor Gabrielli was announced, and requested to have a private interview

with Lady Belmont. This, however, she declined, insisting that I should be present during the audience. The odious creature was then admitted. He was, as usual all bows and servility; and with much theatrical gesticulation, said that he had come "*de la part de sa chère épouse*," to claim her daughter, as they were on the point of leaving England for the continent. Lady Belmont told him that her removal was at present quite impossible, on account of her severe illness, but that Madame Gabrielli should have free access to her, whenever she wished to see her; and strongly recommended that Johnson should be sent immediately, as she, of course, would be a comfort to the invalid.

She then stated her wishes and views with regard to Rosalie, which were most kind and liberal.

She said that, in the event of Madame Gabrielli's consenting to give up Rosalie to their care, Lord Belmont and herself would enter into an agreement with them, engaging to provide amply for her, and that every care should be taken to advance her in respectability and happiness.

The subtle Italian, through all his endeavours to disguise his feelings, was evidently perplexed and enraged at this proposal, so difficult to reject, from its extreme eligibility with regard to Rosalie.

He talked a great deal about the tender heart of his *carissima sposa*, and the extreme attachment she felt towards her child, all of which he knew was a mere *façon de parler*; however, he said he would consult with her, although he feared she never would consent to the very generous, and noble offer of Madame la Marquise.

We at once foresaw that such would be the case; for it was easy to perceive, that the cupidity of the man was excited, and that it was, in order to make money by the poor girl, that he was so anxious to keep her firmly within his clutches.

Oh! how I wished for riches! for I believe, had I possessed them, I should have bribed the man at any price, rather than sacrifice her to such a wretch, and

to a future existence, which would be to her, constituted as I knew her to be, misery itself.

Lady Gertrude and I used to converse for hours upon the subject, but we could not inspire each other with any thing like hope.

A letter arrived from Madame Gabrielli evidently not composed by herself. It was a mixture of servility and impertinence; but its purport was to express, that no power on earth, nor offers of any description, would induce her to give up her child; she hinted that no one else had any right over the actions of Rosalie, but herself, and as her mother she commanded her to return to her, the very moment she was able to leave her room, since already, Signor Gabrielli's plans had been seriously deranged by her inconvenient illness. She wished for no other communication upon the subject, from any quarter, as her decision was irrevocably made; and, therefore, it was utterly useless for any one to attempt to alter her fixed determination. She concluded this composition, by some overstrained expressions of gratitude to the Marchioness, which did not accord very harmoniously, with the other part of her epistle—and thus ended our hopes.

It was a sad task to communicate this intelligence to poor Rosalie, who was slowly recovering; but still I was obliged to do so. I found the only path I had now to pursue, was not uselessly to condole with her, but to endeavour to strengthen her mind, to enable her to bear her misfortunes with fortitude. As she lay, poor little girl, on the sofa, pale and exhausted, from both mental and bodily sufferings, I talked to her seriously and firmly.

I besought her to cling for support, to Him from whom alone it could proceed; which was the only means of enabling her to look calmly upon the evils that threatened the future. I tried to enforce upon her mind, that the defence which religion provides, is indeed a "shield and buckler," which the Almighty spreads before the believer, to cover him "from the terror of night, and the arrow that flieth by day;"

when the time of trouble comes—and come it must to all—that it places the virtuous under the pavillion of the Almighty, by affording them that relief, which arises from the belief of the divine protection; it opens to them sources of consolation, which are hidden from others by the additional strength of mind, with which it endows them; it sets them upon a rock, against which the tempest may beat, but which it cannot shake. The eye of God dwells equally upon the lonely dwelling, and on the palace of a king; every pang of sympathy, every labour of love, every feeling of submission—is known to Him; every privation patiently endured, every virtue humbly exercised, He can abundantly recompense; the meanest of his servants is dear and valuable in His gracious sight, and many a name unknown, or persecuted on earth, will be found written by His merciful hand, in the book of life.

She always listened to me, dear child, with earnest attention; my words sank deep into her heart, and with God's assistance had their due effect. Her mind became gradually fortified against the events of this inconstant state; higher prospects arose before her mind, and I trust she was, in a measure, prepared for future storms. Her reflections were now such, that "to the upright make light arise in darkness," and she endeavoured, with all the fervency of her soul, to cast her cares upon her Father in heaven, humbly trusting that he would indeed care for her.

I could not but agree with her, that her prospects were very gloomy, and that she would have extreme difficulties to encounter. We did not conceal from her, the projects of the Gabriellis, and she was informed that most likely they intended, that she should become an actress. We opened her eyes, to the certainty of her having to mix in society which would be repugnant to every feeling; but still we assured her, even through that very ordeal, she might pass scathless, if she held fast the principles which had been so constantly inculcated in her mind. Assisted by the compassionate mercy of the Almighty, she

need never feel herself abandoned or unprotected, left in this vale of tears, to bear solitary and alone her woes. In her dark, as well her brightest hours, God would be with her; His influence cheer her in the saddest moments; it would accompany her steps, to the most distant regions of the earth. Should she be separated from all those she loved, exiled to a foreign land, even there, "the hand of God would hold her, and his right hand guide her."

But, although my lips uttered words of support and comfort, my heart sunk with dread when I considered her sad fate. On making inquiries into the character of Gabrielli, we found that he was a man noted for the profligacy of his habits. "How," thought I, "can Lady Belmont with her virtuous, and fastidious notions upon the subject of female propriety, countenance for the future, any degree of intimacy between her pure, and high born children, and the daughter-in-law of such a person as the Italian?"

The more I reflected upon the subject, the more hopeless it appeared; and when the parting moment arrived, and we had to relinquish the poor girl into the hands of her—I can only term them executioners—I felt that it was like hurling her at once into the pit of destruction.



CHAPTER VIII.

I SHALL never forget the thoughtful kindness with which the young men of the family, treated our heroine during this period. I had not before seen Rosalie so attractive as regards personal appearance, for during this brief space of sorrow, she seemed to have advanced years in womanly beauty. The character of her countenance had entirely changed: from the laughing child, she had become the sorrowing Madon-

na; her complexion pale and clear—her large eyes drooping, and their long dark lashes too often moist with tears. I was now certain that my prediction would be verified, and that her loveliness would daily increase to transcendent beauty.

Fitz-Ernest and his brothers had free ingress to their sister's dressing-room, and there they even assisted the sweet Gertrude in trying to sooth the stricken girl.

Fitz-Ernest, who naturally possessed a serious turn of disposition, aided me to strengthen her mind, by inculcating ideas of submission, indeed of obedience, for we foresaw that her life would be truly one of hardship—cruelty even we imagined, might be exercised towards her by the unprincipled being to whose dominion she would have henceforth to yield; for we heard that, in addition to his imperfections, he was of a furious and ungovernable temper.

Lord Henry, the second son, more volatile and light hearted than his brother, tried to laugh away her grief.

"Never mind, Rosy," he would say, "after all you will be Prima Donna of the Italian Opera, and no bad thing let me tell you; and if you go on improving as you have done lately what with those lustrous eyes and that voice, which you know, even in your worst days, we always considered like that of a Siren, you will no longer be the Coal Black Rose, but the Bella Bellissima Rosa. You will have all the men in London at your feet. You will be half smothered with garlands and bouquets that will be showered upon you, from every box in the Opera, and your jewel case will not be large enough to contain the presents which will pour from all quarters. I shall be quite proud of you, Rosalie."

Rosalie turned away, shuddering from such consolation; but Fitz-Ernest had the power to sooth her wounded feelings. His manners were mild and persuasive; his voice full of pathos and sweetness. Most thoughtful were the proofs he gave of his anxiety for

the amelioration of her lot, and to provide, in some measure, for her future comfort. One of the most substantial and valuable, was ensuring to her the attendance of her faithful Johnson. The poor woman arrived one day in great despair; she brought the sad tidings to the unhappy girl, that the night before she had received her dismissal from Gabrielli. Had she only considered her own advantage and comfort, it would have been far better for her, to have relinquished a service now rendered irksome, and disagreeable in the extreme, from the character and habits of the master she had acquired; but she knew that to Rosalie her departure would be most fatal—most injurious; she anticipated for this loved child, nothing but privations, inconveniences and misery. She felt that she had it in her power, to assist and comfort her in a hundred different ways; and this devoted creature would rather have begged her way to Italy, than have quitted her for ever.

Fitz-Ernest heard the circumstance, and without saying a word of his intentions, hastily left the house; he ascertained, from the porter, where Gabrielli was to be found, and ordered his cab, soon found himself in that part of the town, so ably pourtrayed by an inimitable author; it is so descriptive, that I cannot forbear inserting it here.

“Although a few members of the graver professions live about Golden Square, it is not exactly in any body’s way, to or from any where. It is one of the squares that have been; a quarter of the town that has gone down in the world, and taken to letting lodgings. Many of its first and second floors are let furnished to single gentlemen, and it takes boarders besides. It is a great resort of foreigners.

“The dark complexioned men who wear large rings, and heavy watch-guards, and bushy whiskers, and who congregate under the Opera colonnade, and about the box-office in the season, between four and five in the afternoon, when Mr. Seguin gives away the orders—all live in Golden Square, or within a

street of it. Two or three violins, and a wind instrument from the Opera band, reside within its precincts. Its boarding-houses are musical, and the notes of pianos, and harps float in the evening time round the head of the mournful statue—the guardian genius of a little wilderness of shrubs, in the centre of the square. On a summer's night, windows are thrown open, and groups of swarthy moustachio'd men are seen by the passer-by, lounging at the casements, and smoking fearfully. Sounds of gruff voices practising vocal music, invade the evening's silence, and the fumes of choice tobacco scent the air. There snuff and cigars, and German pipes and flutes, and violins, and violoncellos, divine supremacy between them. It is the region of song and smoke. Street bands are on their mettle in Golden Square, and itinerant glee-singers quaver involuntarily, as they raise their voices within its boundaries."

Fitz-Ernest easily discovered in this quarter, the abode of the Gabriellis. He was ushered up to a first floor, where he found Madame Gabrielli alone. The air of discomfort which pervaded the room, and her own altered appearance, were a strange contrast to the neat clean little parlour in which he had always seen her formerly and the decent propriety of dress, which she used to wear at Fairbourne. Now there was an evident attempt at finery—at youthfulness of appearance. She was seated on a dirty faded sofa, her head adorned with a cap that had already become begrimed, by the dirt and smoke of London; but which was ornamented with tawdry coloured ribands. Her hair had evidently been tortured by vain attempts to make it fall in ringlets; her person was attired in a silk dress, very short, and very scanty, but still it was silk, and Madame Gabrielli considered that a great improvement on her neat, clean Fairbourne cotton dresses; her feet had been most certainly equipped, from a *ready made* shop in Cranbourne Alley; and very smart—although very unshapely they looked, in a pair of bronze slippers.

She received the young Lord with some degree of

confusion ; she knew not whether the meeting was to be hostile or amicable. Lord Fitz-Ernest at once satisfied her on that point. With his usual frank, unaffected manner, he shook hands with her, and immediately entered upon the subject of his visit, which was to intercede, in behalf of Rosalie's still being allowed to retain the comfort of Johnson's attendance.

Madame Gabrielli coloured violently, and appeared at a loss what to say, but on Fitz-Ernest's adding, "My dear Madame, it cannot surely be your own wish, to part with your excellent and well-tried servant ;" he was surprised by seeing her suddenly burst into tears, and at the same moment hearing her husband on the stairs, she rose and hastily went into an adjoining apartment.

It was with no slight degree of disgust, that Fitz-Ernest found himself *tête-à-tête* with this odious foreigner ; and his heart sunk, when he remembered that Rosalie, with all her refinement, her ideas and manners so innocent, and lady-like, would soon be under the unlimited control of this low, coarse-minded man.

It was not long before he discovered that the expense attendant upon having the addition of Johnson in the journey was the chief objection to her accompanying them. This obstacle, Fitz-Ernest easily devined the means of overcoming ; there was a golden key, which he found most useful in the present instance, and which immediately opened the heart of the avaricious Italian, and this generous noble youth, was not sparing in the expensive means that he took to obtain his purpose. On promising to pay a large sum, Gabrielli agreed to allow Johnson to go with them to Italy, and more than one aching heart rejoiced at this event.

Although we could extract but little from this good woman, for she seemed determined to be as silent as possible on the subject, still it was too certain, from her grave looks, and the portentous shake of her head, when any questions were asked her, that already the weak, but unfortunate Madame Gabrielli had disco-

vered that there were many more thorns than roses in the path she had chosen for herself; and that the dismissal of her old servant, had been a dreadful stroke to her.

We may easily imagine Rosalie's gratitude; already had she looked up to Fitz-Ernest as a being so exalted—so superior, that she could almost have worshipped him; and now when he had told her what he had done, at the same time repeating those kind expressions which he had before so often uttered, "that she must ever consider him in the light of her most anxious friend, and remember, that if ever she imagined he had it in his power to befriend and assist her, she was to promise to apply to him, without hesitation or reserve;" when these words of friendship flowed from his lips, and Rosalie looked upon a countenance which was like a mirror, reflecting the most benevolent and beautiful qualities of the heart, with the full tide of gratitude overwhelming her every feeling she sank before him, she clasped his knees, she kissed his hands, whilst tears of mingled joy and bitterness flowed in torrents down her cheeks.

"I cannot thank you," she faltered out in broken accents, "I cannot thank you;—poor indeed would be my weak expressions, to convey the depth of my gratitude; but, Lord Fitz-Ernest," she continued with the utmost anxiety depicted in her looks, "promise me one boon, and perhaps my heart may still not break; promise me, that under every circumstance that may hereafter befall me, you will not despise me, you will not prejudge me; for believe me when I declare, that abject as I may appear associating with, and surrounded by those, whose conduct you must condemn, I bear a talisman about me which will preserve me from contamination—the idea of having once possessed your regard, and the affection of your noble family. You may avoid me," she added sobbing bitterly, "but think with pity—not with scorn upon poor Rosalie."

Dear, excellent young man! little did he imagine, that whilst he was pouring oil and wine into the

wounds of her mind, he was in fact unconsciously, laying a foundation of wretchedness to the young girl, which did indeed prove incurable—and most fatal.

There are dormant fires lurking in the depths of the female bosom which, when once enkindled, become impetuous, and are sometimes desolating in their effects!

It is of no use dwelling upon this melancholy period—the deep sorrow of the young ones, and the graver regrets of her more experienced friends, for to Lady Belmont with her refined and strict ideas, Rosalie appeared lost to them for ever.

The day arrived but too soon, and the poor girl was to be torn from those she loved so well.

I believe nothing would have supported her, through the last parting, but the assurance, I whispered into her ear, that it would not be long before she saw me; that I would follow her to Italy. At this last hope, a gleam of comfort did, for a moment, beam from those sad eyes, and she faintly said, “Then I feel that I shall not be utterly abandoned.”

The day fixed for her departure was now come, and the sorrowing child was given into the hands of her mother.

Can I ever forget the anguish of her countenance as she clung to me, and fixed her mournful eyes upon me when I was about to take my leave! This might be said to be the first commencement of her real sorrows, and heavy and foreboding were the thoughts that filled my heart, when at last I bade her a sorrowful farewell.



CHAPTER IX.

VARIOUS circumstances, and a long and painful illness, prevented and deferred my proposed, and much desired visit to Italy. We had heard occasionally from Rosalie, but her letters were little satisfactory,

for they were evidently written with constraint, which we could understand, as they were most certainly submitted to the inspection of those with whom she lived. At length I was enabled to leave England, and at once bent my steps towards Naples, in which city Rosalie resided. The date of her last letter indicated where she was to be found, and the morning after my arrival, I set out, my heart beating with that degree of agitation, and nervous pleasure, which one experiences in the expectation of meeting those we love, after a long and painful absence.

The street was in an old part of the town, gloomy, when contrasted with the gay appearance of the modern city, which is formed upon a plan so splendid and elegant. The house to which I was directed, as the abode of Gabrielli, was built in the heavy imperfect style of architecture, invented and adopted during the middle ages, which gave a sombre appearance to the habitation.

I was preparing to ascend the staircase, which led to the apartments occupied by the family, when my passage was impeded by a young man, who entered immediately after me, and who, in his extreme impatience, little heeded me as he flew past, full of youthful activity and eagerness. I was peculiarly struck even by the transitory glance I caught of his countenance. I could easily perceive that he was Italian by birth, from his clear olive complexion, glowing, however, with the hues of health, his bright dark eyes, and black hair wreathed in short curls round his open fearless brow; bold and light was his step, and I could not help smiling, when I contrasted it with the measured stiffened gait with which I slowly followed him; and then I almost sighed to think that my days of youth and strength were over.

The young man, who appeared to be about twenty years of age, carried in one hand an enormous bouquet; in the other an open basket, through which I saw some magnificent purple grapes. A kind of instinct told me they were for Rosalie, therefore I followed his impetuous steps, as closely as I could. He

passed along a gallery, and at length reached a door at which he paused, and knocked.

"*Entrate,*" said a soft musical voice, which at once I knew to be that of Rosalie. Immediately the door was opened by the youth, who, without closing it again, walked rapidly into the apartment. I did not advance for I could stand concealed by a projecting part of the wall, and, at the same time command a view of the interior of the room.

It was a vast apartment, furnished (or rather unfurnished,) in the true Italian style. The table, at which indeed my sweet Rosalie was seated, and a few chairs, were the greater part of its contents, excepting a marble slab or two, upon which were arranged the choicest flowers. I must not, however, omit a pianoforte, a quantity of music, and several bird-cages suspended at the windows.

Rosalie, as I have already said, was seated before the table, busily employed in copying music. What a change had eighteen months wrought in her appearance! From the child, she had matured into the loveliest of women. She was pale and very thin, but the outline of her figure was beautiful in the extreme. She wore a white dress with long-loose sleeves; her hair was simply arranged, in quite a classic manner, on her small and well formed head; and her pleased smile, and the glow of animation which spread over her features, as she raised her eyes on the entrance of the youth, rendered her, at that moment, transcendently lovely.

"Oh Arturo," she exclaimed, in the purest Italian as he approached her, "what—more beautiful flowers! Those you brought me last are not yet dead. I have just been putting fresh water to them; see how bright and beautiful they look; and those splendid grapes," she added, as he drew his treasure from the basket, "kind, good Arturo, how you spoil me—what should, I do without you!"

"*Ah signorina mia,*" replied the young man, his eyes glistening with pleasure, "how amiable it is of you to thank me; it is I who am the obliged; your

goodness in accepting what I so humbly bring, makes me, indeed, the debtor. And see, sweet Rosalie," he continued, producing from the basket some stores of green food for the birds, "I have not forgotten what will make your pretty pets very happy to-day. I have taken a holiday this afternoon, and am come here to spend it with you. Will you allow me to remain, *bellissima signorina?*"

Rosalie smiled, and then sighed.

"I doubt whether Signor Gabrielli would be satisfied, that I should be so long idle; I have a great deal of music to copy, but you will assist me, and you shall afterwards sing with me, Arturo, and then my tasks will pass lightly and profitably away."

Arturo was about to answer, and a delighted acquiescence was upon his lips, when hearing the sounds of footsteps approaching, I thought it best to emerge from my place of concealment; in another moment, I had entered the apartment and was standing before the astonished girl. With a shriek of surprise, and joy she flew into my arms, and whilst I pressed her to my bosom, I felt the tears of warm affection flow from my eyes.

It is impossible to describe the joy we both felt in this reunion. Rosalie appeared as if restored to new life. She made me sit down then placed herself on her knees before me, with my hands closely pressed within hers, and her tearful eyes fixed earnestly upon my countenance, she remained some time in silence; her heart was too full for words—she could only look her joy.

She was roused from this state of mute happiness, by seeing Arturo suddenly take up his hat, and rush towards the door, through which he was going to make a sudden exit, when she called to him:

"Arturo, come here; before you go—and I will not detain you now—let me present you to Mr. Leslie. How often have you heard me talk of this dearest and best of friends."

The countenance of the young man, which had before assumed rather a disappointed and sombre ap-

pearance, now beamed again, and he approached me with an air at once courteous and kind. "Oh! my dear Sir," she continued, "you must love Arturo for my sake; he has truly been to me the best of brothers; if you did but know all his affectionate attention—his unremitting exertions for my comfort and happiness! without him, I feel I hardly could have drawn on my weary existence."

The young Italian's cheeks glowed, and his eyes glistened as Rosalie uttered these words; he was vehement in the warmth of his expressions, but she interrupted him by saying: "Now, Arturo, you must go, for I have much—oh how much to say to this my friend—my father. Come again in two hours, if you can; but at present I have neither eyes nor ears for any one else."

The youth instantly obeyed her; but with steps less light and elastic, than those with which he had entered the apartment: and as I gazed after his youthful, and beauteous form as he slowly departed, the thought darted quickly through my mind, that there was a tale of love to be told in that quarter.

And now that we were alone, Rosalie seemed to feel, that she must again renew her tender caresses. Her warm heart appeared to expand with delight, at the sight of her old and devoted friend. My silver hair, and furrowed brow, were looked upon by her with more tenderness—more apparent admiration, than she had bestowed on the handsome countenance of Arturo. How truly lovely she looked, sweet girl! I sighed, when I saw all my predictions as to her beauty, so fully verified.

By degrees, when the first emotions of her joy had partly subsided, I drew from her the particulars of her life since our separation.

Poor child, much indeed, had she suffered! Gabrielli, she confessed to me—but she did so with shrinking, fear, and hesitation—was possessed of a most violent and tyrannical temper. Her unfortunate mother was one of the most wretched of women; as for herself—and her face grew pale, and she shuddered as she

commenced the subject—she said she certainly did undergo much fatigue, and was harassed to the very utmost pitch, by the Italian's absorbing anxiety, that she should improve in music; almost every hour in the day was devoted to the study of it. But that was the least part of her troubles, her fondness for the science rendered it supportable; it was living under the same roof with such a man—witnessing his daily ill-treatment of her unhappy mother—that was most distressing to her feelings; and then the having to associate with his friends!

"Toward me," she continued, "his conduct is at present less brutal. I have taught him," and her eyes kindled as she spoke, and a flash of indignant fire shot from them, "in a degree to fear me. Oh dear Mr. Leslie," she exclaimed bursting into tears, "if you knew what I have suffered—what I have endured; that monster has exposed me to insult, which I would not shock your kind heart by describing. In order to teach me, (he said) the science of acting, he brought into the house a man of the vilest and most vicious habits. I was left alone with him for hours, exposed to all the libertinism of his manners; but," she continued as rising from her seat, she paced the apartment with agitated steps, whilst her countenance assumed a look of fierceness, quite unnatural to her, "I have dared him to repeat the outrage; young and feeble as I am, I conquered—but oh! in what manner! what torture I endured throughout the trial! I determined not to open my lips, not to sing a single note, until I obtained Gabrielli's solemn promise, that I should never see that man again, or be exposed to similar insults; that I was to take no lesson of any description, but in the presence of Johnson who, I knew, alone had the strength of mind to guard me properly from insolence; but before I could obtain this promise, what weeks of persecution and cruelty had I to undergo! I was threatened—confined. He even endeavoured to starve me into obedience; but he at length discovered that I possessed a spirit unbending as his own, how little careful I was of preserving

my wretched life, how slightly I valued its continuance! Death would indeed have been a welcome release. Oh! how I prayed for it. My health gave way, but my resolution was firm—immoveable. I cannot tell you all my reasons, for what may appear to you excessive obstinacy. I would not torture your kind nature by detailing them, they are too horrid—too dreadful,” and she placed her hands upon her eyes, as if to shut out some painful image.

I was so much shocked, that I could not interrupt her by making any comment; and, conquering her emotion, she continued her sad story.

“Agony of mind—deprivation of every kind, brought me at last to the brink of the grave. Then did my persecutor become really frightened; he thought he was about to lose a source of future wealth, which he fancies is vested in the unfortunate girl before you. In dismay, he promised any thing, every thing to tranquillize my mind; but still though weakened in body, to the utmost pitch of feebleness, I was firm as a rock in determination. I made him write what I dictated, and obtained from him a solemn assurance, which has hitherto benefited me much. I have now the comfort of this apartment, which I can call my own. I continue to study hard, certainly; I go to my bed every night fatigued and exhausted, but still it is peace—happiness—compared to what I have endured. I have had some gleams of comfort throughout all this distress. I have been supported in my duty by all that I learnt from you, dearest Sir: strength was vouchsafed to me, by clinging to that trust, which indeed, in my hour of need, did not fail me.

“And what support and consolation was the attendance of Johnson! it has been indeed an inestimable blessing, and I prize it doubly, from the remembrance whence it sprung. Signor Gabrielli would fain have deprived me of this my only consolation, but for the continued generosity of dear, dear Lord Fitz-Ernest, who, by paying largely for her board, bribes the avaricious man to allow her to remain; nothing else would have tempted him, for in his heart he detests her—al-

most fears her; for she is bold and dauntless, where either the welfare of my mother or myself is concerned; she braves his anger and asserts our rights; we could not have supported our fate, if it had not been for her unfailing exertions for our comfort."

"And who," I asked after a pause of some moments, "is the youth who has just left the room?"

"Oh! dear Arturo," she replied, her countenance relaxing into a gentle smile, "the best and kindest friend I have in Italy, who has been truly a brother to me here. Although quick and violent in his feelings, like all Italians, notwithstanding his impetuosity, he possesses good sense, and the truest of hearts. My acquaintance with him commenced at the seminario, which I have attended for the purpose of study; his profession also is to be that of music. His voice is a splendid tenor, and as practising with him is very beneficial to me, his intimacy has been tolerated, and his society has been my greatest solace. I cannot enumerate all the acts of kindness and attention which he seems never weary of showering upon me. If I could only make him a little less *empressé*—a little calmer, quieter in his deportment, our intercourse would be delightful; but he sometimes overpowers me by the warmth and energy of his desire to contribute to my comfort and happiness; but Arturo, with all his little faults, is very dear to me."

I looked at Rosalie when she said this, with some degree of curiosity; but she was so composed and collected, so completely free from the embarrassment which ever attends any feelings, belonging or proximating to the passion of love, that at once I felt certain, that although poor Arturo might experience towards her sentiments of the warmest nature, hers were those of the calmest and most sisterly affection.

Whilst we were thus speaking, a gentle knock was heard at the door, and the subject of our conversation again entered. He came in with a degree of timidity, uncertain whether his presence was desired or not; he was most cordially welcomed by us both. I could speak Italian fluently, therefore was able to converse

with him, and oh! how the eloquent blood rushed to his cheeks, and what joy sparkled in his eyes, when I told him that he must look upon me also as his friend; for all that Rosalie had related to me of his goodness towards her, had already created for him, a warm place in my heart.

Certainly, I never saw a more splendid specimen of youthful, though manly beauty; and when I gazed on him, I could almost have accused my dear favourite of coldness, not to be influenced by the ardour which flashed from every glance of his expressive countenance. Little did I imagine at that moment what was passing in her heart! how completely every avenue of love for another was obstructed by one all-engrossing feeling, one which strengthened daily—hourly—which was nurtured and cherished by her, as the only stay by which she clung to existence. “Man is the creature of impulse, of ambition; love is the embellishment of his early life, or a song piped in the interval of the acts, but a woman’s whole life is a history of the affections; the heart is her world—it is there her ambition strives for empire—it is there her avarice seeks for hidden treasures; she sends forth her sympathies on a venture, she embarks her whole soul in the traffic of affection, and if shipwrecked, her case is hopeless—for it is the bankruptcy of the heart.”

How delightful was this evening which we passed together. Gabrielli and his wife, had gone on an expedition of amusement, and were not to return until the following day. Poor Madame Gabrielli was now and then included in these trips, but Rosalie never accompanied them. There were several reasons for keeping her secluded, besides her own great distaste to the idea of mixing with the associates of the Italian; In the subsequent knowledge I acquired of the position and views of the man, I soon discovered the motives which directed him, in many parts of his conduct towards Rosalie. I opened his heart, and gained his confidence in some degree, by the only means which I found would ensure me free access to my dear young friend. I made him presents, which at once

secured me from his impertinence, and converted him into my humble servant.

He told me that Rosalie's improvement in singing was wonderful beyond measure; that her voice surpassed any he had before heard; her acting also was superb; it appeared as if she were born for the stage, to surprise the world by her dramatic powers!

"Most fortunate it was," he added, "that I discovered the gem, which would otherwise have been lost—buried in obscurity. She is a star too shining—too precious to be brought forward on any inferior stage; she must, from the commencement of her career, be first rate, she must be duly appreciated." Therefore the London Opera was fixed upon, as most worthy to be the theatre at which she should make her debut.

"Her beauty," he also said, "will create a most vivid sensation;" for, indeed, he declared that he was already obliged to keep her *en retraite*, as she attracted the utmost attention, whenever she was seen by strangers; "in short," added the wily Italian, endeavouring to blind me by assuming an appearance of excessive regard for propriety, and anxiety for Rosalie, "I do all in my power to preserve the charming girl from any thing that can injure the innate purity and freshness of her mind; and I shall have pride and satisfaction in feeling, that even in a profession so open to calumny and censure, there will be at least one *cantatrice sans reproche*."

Vile wretch! I longed for lightning to flash from my eyes, to blast him for his iniquitous hypocrisy. I, who knew all his base feelings, and the conduct he had at first pursued towards the poor girl!

His only motive for thus secluding her, arose from selfishness;—the desire that her beauty and talent might burst like an unexpected meteor upon the public; for I heard from Johnson what had indeed appalled me, had shaken my very inmost soul with horror; and it required much self-command, I may add deception, which only my affection for Rosalie could have made me assume, to maintain a semblance of peace towards the base Gabrielli. Johnson, with tears

of sorrow and disgust, gave me a touching history of all that my poor cherished child had endured; personal privations and discomfort, were but light matters in the scale, compared with the other miseries she had encountered.

It appeared, that in order to bring down her mind in some degree to a level with those with whom she would have to associate—in short, with his own vulgar and depraved tastes and habits, his plan evidently was, at first, to vitiate her feelings—to accustom her to the society and manners of licentious actors and actresses. He wished her to look upon vice and immorality with a hardened eye—to feel pleasure in the light frivolous society of those with whom he lived on terms of intimacy. He cared not what she did, so that she was secured to him as a source of wealth; could he once accomplish this, his task would be much less difficult—he would then be able to mould her to his every wish.

To execute this desired end, the wretch brought into the house a friend, and accomplice; a man whose talent and science in the art of music and acting rendered him well able to aid in the instruction of Rosalie. He was worthy of being the tool and confidant of Gabrielli. The sweet, innocent girl was insulted by this villain, and none of her complaints were heeded by the person who ought to have been her protector. But she at last prevailed; her firmness terrified Gabrielli into submission to her will; and this weak, delicate girl, with no other weapon but her virtue and innocence, had the power of subduing even the audacity of these licentious men.

How proud I felt of my pupil—the child of my adoption and love! She had, indeed, been strengthened by the armour of that faith which it had been my task to inculcate; sustained by its powerful influence, the poor child sunk not under the pressure of persecution. When the clouds gathered, and the murmur of the storm was heard, she found refuge in that trust, which is described as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.

CHAPTER X.

THE aspect of Rosalie's existence had, for a brief space, brightened. I represented to Gabrielli how necessary relaxation was to the restoration of her health, and so that she still continued her studies, he was willing that, under my escort, she should make some excursions in the neighbourhood. We also went together almost every night to the Opera of San Carlos. A box was appropriated to her use; for, as Gabrielli was a principal performer, he had it in his power to command that indulgence at an easy rate, and he forced her to avail herself of the privilege, it being professionally advantageous to her. Naples is still the great mart of the musical genius of Italy; and its grand national opera of San Carlos, taken in all its combination of architectural and ornamental beauty, its adaptation to sound, principal singers, fine choruses, and scenic illusions, is certainly superior to all other theatres in the world.

Music was a real source of delight to Rosalie; and had it not been forced upon her in so unpleasant a manner, would almost have amounted to a passion.

We took some delightful expeditions. Every thing was new and charming to Rosalie, who had been so strictly secluded. Arturo was ever our companion in these rambles, and daily I became more attached to this most interesting youth. I perceived, with sorrow, with what intensity his ardent heart doated upon Rosalie. It did indeed grieve me, for I foresaw trouble to one who had created an interest in my affections. As for Rosalie, I felt that my love for her was my destiny—a chain that had wound itself round my heart; and I was certain, that although I pressed it to

my bosom with affection, it was drawing upon me sorrow—both future and present.

Our excursions were truly delightful. Sometimes we commenced them at so early an hour, that the stars were still burning brightly in the clear blue heavens, but they soon, though gradually, to use the words of a distinguished writer, “paled their ineffectual fires; a sort of sapphire light fell like a shower on the summits of the mountains, and ushered in the rising sun, which ascended most gloriously, most awfully above that mighty elevation, where the sublimest spectacle of nature is most sublime; many a point of bleached rock sparkled with reflected rays, and hung above the rolling vapours of the valleys beneath, like beacon lights on the ocean’s verge, and many a changeful meteoric illusion cheated and charmed the eye, until the first burst of day dispelled every atmospheric mist and cloud, and left distinctly traced, and brightly gilt, the surrounding beauties of the scene.”

These expeditions often led us to Puzzuoli, Baia, or the woody cliffs of Pausilippo; and as, on our return, we glided along the moonlit bay, the melody of Italian strains seemed to give enchantment to the scenery of its shore. At this cool hour, the voices of the vine dressers were frequently heard in trio, as they reposed after the labour of the day, on some pleasant promontory, under the shade of poplars; or the brisk music of the dance, from fishermen on the margin of the waves below. The boatmen rested on their oars, while we listened to voices modulated by sensibility to finer eloquence than it is in the power of art alone to display; and at others, while we observed the airy, natural grace, which distinguishes the dance of the fishermen and peasants of Naples. Frequently as we glided round a promontory, whose shaggy mosses impended far over the sea, such magic scenes of beauty unfolded themselves, adorned by these dancing groups on the bay beyond, as no pencil could do justice to. The deep clear waters reflected every image of the landscape; the cliffs branching into wild forms crowned with groves, whose rough foliage often spread down

their steep in picturesque luxuriance; the ruined villa on some bold point, peeping through the trees; peasants' cabins hanging over the precipices, and the dancing figures on the strand—all touched with the silvery tint and soft shadows of moonlight. On the other hand, the sea trembling with a long line of radiance, and showing in the clear distance, the sails of vessels stealing in every direction along its surface, presented objects as interesting as the landscape was beautiful.

I have sometimes blamed myself for having exposed poor Arturo to such a combination of enchantments; under such a sky, with scenes of beauty so seductive around him, his mind must have been more than ever rendered liable to love. All nature seemed to conspire against him, to fan the flame which already burnt far too fiercely in his bosom.

It was surprising to see how much Rosalie's health improved during this period, and the consequent effect it had upon her beauty. Her complexion, though always pale, lost the sickly tinge which before had dimmed the lustre of her charms; her eyes assumed almost their usual expression. On my first arrival, I was startled by the degree of fierceness and wildness with which they were occasionally lighted up; and on speaking upon this subject to the faithful Johnson, she shocked me by the account she gave of the variable state of the spirits, and even of the temper of Rosalie.

"Indeed, sir," she said, "had that wicked man not ceased, in some measure, to persecute the poor child, I do not hesitate to say that I feel convinced that her mind would have given way. Many a night and day have I watched her without daring to leave her side, for certainly there was something, as you remark, in the appearance of her eyes, which made me tremble; and after that dreadful time, when she received such gross insults from the wretch Rinaldo, I was obliged to apply leeches to her temples to produce consciousness, so completely were her senses failing her."

This account made me very anxious, and I redoubled my efforts to amuse her mind, and in every way

to ameliorate her condition. I discovered that it was Gabrielli's intention that the following spring should be the period for her to make her debut upon the stage. Poor girl! when I considered the excitement such an event would occasion, I felt how completely, notwithstanding her aversion from the task, she would enter into every character she had to personify. From the specimens I had witnessed of her acting, I could easily perceive that she would be a complete enthusiast in the art, and no doubt had she not been educated with such different and refined ideas, the *métier* itself might not have been distasteful to her.

Whilst rehearsing scenes from some of the most splendid operas, she was like one inspired. Her magnificent voice—the extraordinary animation of her countenance and gestures—the dignity and grace of every movement, rendered, her indeed unrivalled. She was then fearfully beautiful; but there was something in the impression it made upon my feelings, unearthly, unnatural, and although I could not but admire her acting and feel almost electrified by its brilliancy, still it always filled me with dread—with dismal forebodings. Could her mind bear such violent excitement? Such energy must prey upon itself—that degree of feverish vitality must consume, even whilst it brightened.

It was truly a musical treat to listen to the duets, she sang with Arturo. His voice was a splendid tenor, and the fire and intensity of his feelings made him do ample justice to the beautiful music they sung. He was an orphan, and had been educated by an uncle. His career was to be that of the stage, but his relative had no farther ambition for him than the Italian theatres. I, however, soon discovered that his ardent desire pointed to the same mark, from whence Rosalie was expected to derive such fame; to follow her footsteps—to watch over her with the anxious eye of deep rooted attachment—to be her friend, ay!—even her lover, seemed to be the hope which mingled in his every plan for the present and the future.

I believe I have naturally a tinge of romance in

my composition, and I must own that the warm and generous—the impetuous disposition of this young man—the extraordinary beauty of his person, and the strong indications he gave of a kind and excellent heart, enlisted me completely in his cause; and I wondered that Rosalie did not return his love. I was sometimes almost vexed with her, for the coolness with which she often treated him, and I sympathized truly in all he felt, in consequence of the manner in which she used to endeavour to damp the warmth of his affection; but she acted honourably. She had no heart to give; and although she really loved him, with the sweet, though placid feelings of a sister, and was touched beyond measure by all his tender cares; still I saw that she wished to destroy, at once, any hope that might arise in his mind, that her sentiments would ever resemble those which so tumultuously agitated the bosom of Arturo.

My visit to Naples was shorter than I had intended it should be; indeed, I do not know how I could ever have torn myself away from the only object on earth to whom I felt my presence so essential, for comfort and happiness, had I not been recalled to England by the urgent entreaties of a relative, my return being required for the arrangement of some affairs of the utmost importance to his future welfare. During my stay near Rosalie, I remarked with surprise, how very seldom she made the Belmont family the topic of her conversation; indeed, after she had satisfied her anxiety respecting their welfare, and received from me, upon my first arrival, a most minute and separate account of each individual, composing that beloved circle, she always avoided the subject.

I once expressed this surprise to her, and her answer affected me much. With the deepest sadness in her voice she said, “Dear Sir, it is upon principle, that I check both my words, and even thoughts upon that subject, which is to me the dearest I can ever have on earth. I endeavour to turn from it, and the effort wrings my very inmost soul; but I strive, by degrees, to wean my mind from the idea—the hope

of ever again meeting my almost idolized friends, as I have done. Their kindness towards me, I am convinced, will never lessen; their feeling of interest will follow me to my grave; of this I am thoroughly convinced, and the thought is sweet and soothing consolation; but the more I see of this profession, the more I know of the people with whom I must ever associate, I feel how impossible it would be, how inconsistent with the dignity, and purity of those noble young ladies, to hold any thing like intimacy, with one who has been contaminated, by living in an atmosphere so foul—so tainted, as that in which I have for some time dragged on my weary existence. I feel that I am degraded—sunk; I move about with downcast eyes and hesitating steps; I feel already the finger of scorn pointing at me. You know, my dear Mr. Leslie," she continued, with a kind of wild unnatural laugh, "actresses in this country are denied even the rights of sepulture; does not that convince you, how completely out of the pale of decent society, they must be considered? scarcely ranked as christians, they live despised and die unheeded—unprayed for. No," she exclaimed, as she stood before me, her hands clasped, and that expression glistening in her eyes, which it always alarmed me to behold, "poor Rosalie has taken her final leave of happiness—of hope. I may indeed say with the wretched Medea, *più speme non mi resta*," and at that moment how beautiful was her attitude, but what a countenance of wretchedness did she exhibit!

"You little know the state of my heart, the torture—the agony I endure; but I have one ray of comfort," she continued, clasping her hands with a look of sorrow, I can never forget; "I am convinced that it will not last very long; the source from whence I derived happiness is all dried up; but recollect Mr. Leslie," she added in a hurried manner, and laying her hand upon my arm, and looking wildly and imploringly in my face, "I shall be in England, I fervently pray, when I die; dear generous England!—there, in that blessed land, the refuge for the unhappy, they do not

refuse a narrow grave, a funeral service to the humble broken-hearted actress; remember your promise, Mr. Leslie, recollect the old yew tree—the shaded corner in the church-yard at Fairbourne; you must promise me not to forget it, oh! promise, promise,” she continued, becoming violently hysterical; and indeed I had to promise—to sooth—to endeavour for many hours to calm her, before she could in any way control the overpowering agitation and excitement of her spirits.

Poor girl! in her almost frenzied manner, how truly did she personify some of the heroines, whose characters she studied to represent. I had seen her rehearse the part of *Nina Pazza*, and, gracious heavens! with what thrilling effect! How completely could she portray, and identify herself with the semblance of madness! I, indeed, trembled for her mind. Could she not be saved from a continuance of her present life? If not, I plainly saw she would be lost for ever; but what was to be done? what course to be pursued?

The Italian evidently regarded me with a suspicious eye, and I was certain that he longed for my departure; but still I was determined to maintain my ground. I plied him with presents; anticipated his wants—his wishes, almost exhausted my slender finances, by temporizing with this wretch; but imperative duty at length called me away, and the poor child was again left in the power of this monster.



CHAPTER XI.

It was at Brighton, in the month of November. The Court had taken up its abode at the Pavilion. The town was one scene of gaiety and bustle: crowds of well-dressed people were thronging the promenades, and the pure air and bright atmosphere seemed to have imparted life and vivacity to all. The presence

of royalty—the expectation of seeing the cortége from the palace pass to and fro, gave an additional interest to the busy, lively scene, as each individual received the passing, kind, and condescending notice of a sovereign, whose memory must ever recur to his people with feelings of tender as well as of grateful recollection. He was, indeed, the father of his people, for, in the almost affectionate interest he felt in them all, there was a sort of parental kindness, which sunk deep into their hearts, and which they never can forget.

It was one of those lovely mornings that occur frequently at this favoured spot, even in winter; the air was calm, and the sun so powerful, that, although probably, in the country there might have been a hard frost—here, the air was brisk, but not cold. The sea was quiet as a lake—all nature smiled—autumn appeared as if it were giving its parting gala.

Two young men were sauntering listlessly upon the esplanade; they were both handsome, and aristocracy had marked itself upon their brows. After walking in silence for some moments, the taller, and, perhaps, strictly speaking, the handsomer of the two, and whom we will designate as Sir Francis Somerville, turned to his companion, and said, evidently wishing to get rid of him—

“My good fellow, if you are waiting for me, perchance you may grow weary of the task, for it is my intention to remain here at least an hour.”

“Tell me your inducement, and, perhaps, I may be inclined to do the same; but, I suppose, it is the usual reason, *les beaux yeux* of some fair maid, wife, or widow.”

“It is, indeed,” exclaimed Sir Francis, warming into confidence, as he entered upon the subject. “I am expecting again to see the most beautiful creature my eyes ever looked upon.”

“Then,” replied the other, “I too am fixed as a rock;” and he forthwith took possession of a seat; Sir Francis was about to place himself by his side, when he appeared to be suddenly transfixed by the appear-

ance of some object, and his friend saw him turn extremely red, and, following the direction of his gaze, perceived approaching the figure of a young girl. She was rather tall than otherwise, and her figure was concealed by a large cloak; her bonnet almost entirely shaded her countenance, and an envious veil completed the concealment. She carried in her hand a roll of music. She had nearly reached the spot where the two young men were sitting, when a child who was playing with a hoop ran violently against her, and, with the movement, the parcel dropped from her hands; in another instant, the slight string that bound it giving way by the fall, the music was scattered about, and the wind assisted in dispersing it in all directions.

The two young men gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of assisting the fair sufferer afforded by this confusion, and it was not without some difficulty that they contrived to collect all the various pages that were flying about, to the amusement of the passers by.

During this process, the face of the young girl had been disclosed, and a more lovely one was seldom or never seen. She appeared to be not more than eighteen years of age—such large dark eyes!—a complexion pale but clear, and smooth as marble;—and how is it possible to describe the beauteous form of those rosy lips, which when they smiled, revealed teeth of the most dazzling whiteness! Her hair was jet black, plainly braided upon her open forehead, and when, on receiving the music from Sir Francis, she drew off her glove, in order to fasten with the string the truant leaves, the young men looked with delight upon the small white hands, so delicate and so lady-like.

But now all was accomplished;—the music was rolled up and more firmly secured, and the young girl, with a graceful courtesy of thanks, was about to depart, when suddenly she turned her large beaming eyes upon the companion of Sir Francis, who was standing before her, his eyes riveted with admiration and scrutiny

upon her countenance. She looked for a moment fixedly upon him, and then, uttering a faint low scream, would have sunk to the ground, had not her arm been caught by a woman who had, unperceived by the others joined the group. She, in an instant, roused herself, and, without again raising her eyes, hastily took the arm of this person, and, walking on as fast as her trembling limbs would enable her to do, reached a "fly," and was soon whirled out of the sight of the two friends, who remained for some minutes motionless and silent, from the surprise occasioned by the strangeness and rapidity of this adventure.

"By Jove! this is devilish odd!" exclaimed Sir Francis Somerville. "What made her scream, and almost faint?—she was all smiles and blushes but one moment before! I verily believe it was something she saw in you that frightened her! What could it be?" he again exclaimed, looking at his companion from head to foot; "there's nothing so wondrous frightful about you, or so captivating either, forsooth! You are a good-looking fellow, but upon my word," added the self-satisfied Sir Francis, twisting his mustachios, and casting his eyes with complacency on his own well-proportioned limbs, "if she were inclined to fall in love at first sight, I do not see why she might not have chosen me, quite as soon as your Lordship!"

The young Lord laughed at his friend's complimentary speech, but, as they walked back to the Pavilion, for they were both at that time *attachés* to the Court, he was grave and thoughtful, notwithstanding all the inuendoes and banterings of Sir Francis.

The truth was, there was something in the countenance of the young girl that had peculiarly arrested his attention, and struck upon some chord which vibrated to his heart. It was not her beauty alone: there was an indefinable feeling of having seen some one who resembled her; but it was so vague and shadowy, that he could not fix it upon any one individual; it was not so much admiration as a sensation of intense curiosity and interest. There was an expression in the glance of the unknown beauty, that

haunted his imagination; and the accent of her voice, when she briefly expressed her thanks, rang on his ears like some well-remembered melody. He must see her again.

The young man was restless and uncomfortable, and he saw that he was watched with a scrutinizing eye by Sir Francis, who already felt himself rather ill-used, and jealous. He had been the first to discover the fair *incognita*, and fancied that she was his exclusive property. To improve his acquaintance with her, he was quite determined; but he would not again allow of a partner in the affair. With indefatigable industry, which would have been admirable in a better cause, he sought to discover where she lived and who she was—but in vain—no trace of her could be found?

It must also be allowed, that Lord Fitz-Ernest (whom we have before forgotten to designate by his proper name) was not idle in the same pursuit; but the mysterious beauty had disappeared; and although he lingered, hour after hour, on the esplanade—looked, with a penetrating eye into every vehicle that passed—resorted to the libraries—allowed himself to be jostled by the dirty mob, as he loitered at the coach offices, and, in short, wearied himself by his anxiety, he could not again feast his earnest gaze upon those expressive features; he could only recall to his fancy the enchantment of her smile, and remember the sweetness of her plaintive voice.

For a few days the impression was vivid in the extreme; but with the changeful, happy life of a young man, with the world and all the enjoyments it contains before him, the keenness of it by degrees wore off; and, although the image of the lovely girl often arose before his imagination, in a manner for which he could scarcely account, still it was but a passing thought, and no longer proved, as at first, a real source of annoyance and torment.

CHAPTER XII.

WE have lost sight, for some time, of the Belmont family. It was several months after my return to England, that I found all these amiable beings well and happy in London. Most eagerly and anxiously they asked for every particular concerning poor Rosalie. The account I gave of her caused bitter tears to flow from many an eye.

Sweet Lady Gertrude was, indeed, heart-stricken when she heard the details of all the sufferings her loved friend had endured, and the miseries that were still in store for her. The young men were indignant and disgusted. Lord Henry, who was of an impetuous spirit, quick and ardent in all his feelings, strongly urged his wish to set off immediately for Italy, in order to endeavour to extricate his dearly remembered playmate from the hands of her tyrant.

It may be readily imagined that I opposed this plan most resolutely. What a train of evils would it have engendered! I wished that I had painted the affair with less vivid colours; I saw the effect it produced on the minds of both the young men, and, as is often the case, after having been too diffuse and communicative upon any subject, I longed to unsay all that had escaped my lips.

I remembered the dark countenance of the Italian, the malignity which constantly overspread his features, and, at that moment, I could even imagine that his passions might impel him to the perpetration of almost any crime, howsoever hideous.

I remembered, too, Arturo—his deep, his jealous love for Rosalie; how would he endure the sight of this handsome, generous youth, upon whom the object of his unrequited passion, would pour all the hitherto locked up torrent of her affection—an af-

fection, purely sisterly, but still one she did not dare to demonstrate towards the fiery young man, whose blood flowed with the vehement warmth of his climate, unrestrained by education, precept, or example.

All that could be done at present, was to hold a council upon the subject, and endeavour to discover if there were any possibility of extricating her from the power of Gabrielli; but, after mature deliberation, we found that such a scheme, at present, would indeed be impracticable. The only plan to pursue, was to allow events to take their course; and should the health of the poor girl really give way, after she had appeared upon the stage, which I felt convinced it certainly must do—then would be the moment to make terms with the Italian, and come forward to her rescue, although I feared—oh, God! and but too justly!—that the wretch would rather see her die in the fetters which his avaricious hand had bound around her.

In a private conversation with the Marchioness, I mentioned to her what I considered the morbid state of poor Rosalie's feelings, with regard to her situation, which made her shrink from the idea of associating with those she most loved. Lady Belmont was affected to tears, by this token of the sensibility of the poor girl. In reply, she said to me:

"I cannot but admit, in a great measure, the truth of what the dear child says upon the subject; it is a touching proof of the justness and propriety of her feelings; for, although I can never abandon, or look coldly upon one I love, and ever shall continue to love so well, still it will be a difficult position for us all. The character of Gabrielli appears so unprincipled and unamiable, that it must be painful to my every feeling, to see my daughters in any way mixed up in his concerns. However, their position in the world is such, they need not hesitate to take by the hand one who was the companion of their early years, public as may be her present situation. Still, it is a lamentable business," she continued, "and one that really dwells upon my mind, and makes me unhappy; I often de-

plore, and reproach myself for the part that I have had in this sad finale. The concerts at Belmont! when I brought her so unnecessarily forward, and placed her under the notice of this dreadful Italian; but, little did I foresee such a train of untoward events."

All this excellent lady said, was but too true. I could only listen in silence, and inwardly deplore the sad fate of my poor Rosalie.

I soon discovered that Lady Gertrude had been wooed and won by a youthful nobleman, who appeared in every respect worthy of her. The marriage, however, was not to take place for some months, owing to the young man not having attained his majority. I fancied that I had also made another discovery. There was a certain Lady Constance Delavel, who was much talked about by my young friends; and I soon settled it in my own mind, that Fitz-Ernest must have looked kindly upon her. It appeared an alliance much desired by the family, who were vehement in their praise of this noble young lady; and, indeed, I was told, in confidence, by my sweet lady Gertrude, who never withheld any thing that she thought would interest and give pleasure to her fond old friend, that she knew the fair Constance had no longer a heart at her own disposal, for she was certain it was devotedly bestowed upon her brother.

"But, although Fitz-Ernest," she continued, "adores dear Constance very much, I fear it is not, as yet, that warm attachment which I am sure she feels towards him; but we hope and pray, that in time, we may have the joy of seeing him thoroughly impressed by her perfections. She is a being most peculiarly formed to constitute the happiness of such a delightful creature as our own dear Fitz-Ernest. I am almost inclined to imagine," the sweet girl added, smiling and blushing, "that we women only know how to love fervently and devotedly. However, it is not fair to say so, for I think I could point out one, who understands the feeling as well as we do. You have never told me, Mr. Leslie, how you like Alandale;

but you must love him, and number him also amongst your children, as you have always considered us."

My heart was truly touched by the affection and confidence of this lovely being. I assured her of all she longed and hoped to hear, and gave deserved praise to the object of her choice, who was; indeed, a noble, fine young man, and I trusted fervently, worthy of the treasure it was his bright destiny to hope to possess.

I was, of course, all anxiety to see Lady Constance, and an opportunity soon occurred of satisfying my curiosity. I heard that she had arrived in London, and the next day I found her in Lady Gertrude's morning-room. I was introduced to her in a most flattering manner, and was proud to find that she seemed predisposed, by the affectionate partiality of my dear young friend, to become at once acquainted with me.

I was immediately prepossessed in her favour. Though perhaps not, strictly speaking, beautiful, there was a degree of sweetness and benevolence in her countenance, combined with an air of graceful dignity in her bearing, which was more exquisitely bewitching than the most striking loveliness. Her figure was perfect, and her hands and feet were small and delicate—the stamp of high-breeding pervaded her whole demeanour. At once, I could have guessed that she was nobly born; and on farther acquaintance, I perceived, with much satisfaction, that she was possessed of nobility of soul as well as that of station.

She greeted me most cordially; in a moment I was at my ease with her: and before I had been in her presence half an hour, I was as devoted to her cause, and as anxious for her marriage with Fitz-Ernest, as if I had known her from her infancy.

"Oh, how glad I am that you like her, which I see you do," whispered Lady Gertrude to me, as her friend moved across the room, to examine some work that was in a frame near the window.

"Like her! who could see her and not admire her!" I answered, in the same low tone.

At this instant, the door opened, and our party was increased by the presence of Fitz-Ernest. Then, indeed, did I see the eloquent blood rush over the face and neck of Lady Constance, as she stooped over the frame, and pretended to be busily employed in examining the flowers which were there traced; and when she again raised her head to return Fitz-Ernest's kind, almost affectionate greeting, I saw that she looked paler than she had been before.

I was not quite satisfied with the young Lord's manner; it was almost too kind—too cordial—too unrestrained, to be that of a lover; still, I thought, love must follow; he can never be so cold-hearted as to withstand such attachment as thrills within the breast of that very delightful girl.

The conversation soon took a lively and general turn; Lady Constance quickly recovered from the little embarrassment occasioned by the sudden entrance of Fitz-Ernest, and we all enjoyed our animated and agreeable discussions. Lady Constance evinced a highly cultivated mind, and a lively and refined imagination. Lord Fitz-Ernest had taken up the Morning Post, to find out the advertisement of a new book, and after he had done so, he continued to run his eye over the paper; suddenly, he stopped, and exclaimed in an agitated tone of voice:—"Good Heavens! Mr. Leslie, can this really be she?"

"What do you mean?" we all exclaimed.

He read aloud:—

"We understand, that the debutante who we have before announced as likely to make her appearance immediately after Easter, at the Italian Opera, is the Signora Rosalie, daughter of the celebrated Gabrielli, so well known and appreciated as the finest bass singer who has ever trod the boards of our Italian stage. The young lady is said to be very young, and eminently beautiful; her voice, a splendid contralto; her education, which has been completed in Italy, has rendered her a most finished and accomplished actress. We expect that the musical world will be as-

tounded and delighted by the genius which will burst upon their enraptured senses. We consider that the expected debutante will prove a gem of the most extraordinary lustre."

"Give me the paper," cried Gertrude, hastily, and seizing it from the hand of her brother, she perused the paragraph rapidly again, in order, with her own eyes, to ascertain the truth of what she had heard, and then burst into tears.

"Are you indeed about to be sacrificed, poor Rosalie!" she exclaimed. "But, then," and her countenance brightened, "she will be near us, and we can assist to support and encourage her."

My eyes were flowing in company with this sweet young lady's. The news had come upon us all so suddenly. I had not heard from Rosalie for some time, and we had no idea that she was so soon to be in England; indeed, at this very moment she might be in London.

Fitz-Ernest rose, and in a hurried manner took up his hat. "I shall go immediately," he said, "and endeavour to find out if they have arrived. I will call upon Lafleur, the manager, and ascertain all about them;" and quickly wishing Lady Constance good morning, he left the room.

I do not know why I did so, but instantly my eyes sought the countenance of Lady Constance, and saw that a pang of suffering had shot through her heart; but she strove to conceal any feeling but that of interest in the subject, and immediately entered warmly into it. She had often heard of Rosalie, but it was as the playmate of the young people of the Belmont family. Now, she asked several questions with much eagerness.

"Was she beautiful?"

"Fearfully so," I answered without reflection.

"Was she dark, or fair?"

I described her as she was now;—her jet black hair, her splendid eyes—

"Dark as the stillly night,"

her clear, rich, olive complexion; and warming with the subject, I went on with all the garrulity of age and fondness, more fully to dilate upon it. "I shall never forget when last I saw her," I continued; "she was sitting, with her guitar in her hand, but she was not touching it; she was in deep and painful meditation, and appeared lost to every surrounding object; her fine hair was negligently bound up, but some tresses, which had escaped, played on her neck, and round her beautiful countenance; the light drapery of her dress—her whole figure, air, and attitude, were such as might be copied for a Grecian nymph."

At every word I uttered, Lady Constance looked more sad, and I saw her cast a wistful glance at a large looking-glass which hung before her, where she beheld reflected, features so totally different from those I had been describing; her soft, dove-like, eyes—light glossy ringlets—the fairest and most delicate complexion.

"Poor Lady Constance!" I sighed to myself; "we have all stings in our hearts, and yours you have just received—God grant that it may not long rankle in it!" And I began to turn in my mind thoughts which had never before entered into it—the dreadful idea of the bare possibility of a circumstance that would be, indeed, most fatal—ruinous to the peace of all! This poor child, this unfortunate Rosalie, she seemed fated to be my torment. Much as I loved her, there was a degree of fearful anxiety mingled in all her concerns, a kind of fatality about every circumstance which attended her, that alarmed and troubled me; she was a kind of light, a fascination which I felt I must ever follow, although it might lead me into sorrow and perplexity. She had twined herself so closely round my heart, I could not cast her off, she must ever remain there; but a foreboding feeling told me that she would indeed prove a fearful care.

I sat, silent and absorbed in these painful meditations, but Lady Gertrude continued to talk with much eagerness upon the subject. Lady Constance asked, with intense interest, question after question; and I

heard words which convinced me that the sweet fair girl was making for herself a formidable rival in poor Rosalie. "May God avert such an evil!" was my most fervent aspiration, as I quitted the apartment; and I carried away with me a painful impression which seemed to haunt my imagination, and which I, in vain, endeavoured to shake off.



CHAPTER XIII.

I DINED at Belmont House that evening, and of course was all impatience to learn the result of Fitz-Ernest's inquiries respecting Rosalie. He told me that he had seen Lafleur, who assured him, that the Gabriellis had not yet arrived in London; he knew they were in England, as Gabrielli had been with him, but of their present place of destination he was quite ignorant; he added that they must soon be here, as the appearance of the daughter, as he called her, was so shortly to take place.

"Good heavens, Mr. Leslie," continued Fitz-Ernest, "what a description Lafleur gives of Rosalie! what a splendid creature she must have become! He went to Italy on purpose to see her, before he entered into the engagement; for Gabrielli was preposterous in his demands; however, without any hesitation, he agreed to his enormous terms. I can well imagine her voice being as fine as he describes it; but, upon my word, to think of our poor little coal black Rose having turned out such an exquisitely beautiful woman, is almost beyond the verge of my comprehension; certainly I have heard you speak of her as perfection, but forgive me when I say that I believed just one half of all your eulogiums, and placed the other, to the partiality and interest you have ever felt, in so warm a degree, for the poor girl; indeed, dear sir, you need

not be offended at what I have said, for no one can participate more fully in your feelings than I do. I can never forget old associations and attachments, and the idea of Rosalie is annexed to many a bright thought of by-gone days."

* * * * *

After this period the subject of Rosalie, was, for a short space at rest. It was ever one of pain and anxiety, and we seemed all, with one accord, to be waiting for the moment when we should hear of her arrival in London; but it was with a heavy and foreboding heart that I looked forward to this event. In the mean time my thoughts were directed towards a result which offered a much more smiling aspect—it was the daily increasing pleasure Fitz-Ernest evinced in the society of the fair Constance. Not a day elapsed without the two families meeting, and every hour I fancied I observed the feelings of my young friend grow more like those of a lover towards this charming girl. The more I knew of her, the stronger became my admiration and affection, and although at first sight I did not think her peculiarly handsome, soon I began to consider her the very perfection of loveliness. My readers will long ere this have perceived that I am a most enthusiastic old man; some of them perchance may have set me down as being nearly in a state of dotage, but if they had only seen and known all the delightful beings, amongst whom it was my bright destiny to be thrown, they would excuse my raptures and *must* have said, that I could not be too ecstatic upon such a theme.

All, as I have before stated, went on smoothly with the Belmont family, and it was decided that the whole party were to go to the Abbey during the Easter recess. They greatly urged me to accompany them, but I was proof against all their affectionate importunity; there was something about that place which made me very sad, and I now invariably kept aloof from it; it reminded me too painfully of days of past happiness—days of usefulness—of peace arising from the feeling of well employed time, such as I was certain I should

never again enjoy; another reason chained me to the spot, I wished to remain in London, to receive the earliest notice of Rosalie's arrival.

I solaced myself with the idea that in the lovely shades and walks of the beautiful spot to which they had repaired, the two lovers' minds would be more than ever attuned to love; the country seemed more fitted for such feelings, than the clouded atmosphere of London; I augured most favourably of this trip, and was convinced that Lady Constance would return, the affianced bride of the excellent and noble Fitz-Ernest; and with these bright hopes I cheered myself, whilst the days passed without bringing any tidings of Rosalie. I importuned the manager with inquiries, but it struck me that he was cautious of speaking of the movements of Gabrielli, and I felt certain there was some preconcerted concealment in the case, and that the wily Italian was determined to keep Rosalie from the effects of our influence as long as it was possible to do so. I could only learn, what I before knew, that soon after Easter she was to make her appearance; I was fidgetty and uncomfortable. Constantly did I find myself bending my steps towards Golden Square, and all those neighbourhoods, where I thought it most likely Gabrielli would take up his abode.

I was walking one day across Soho Square, when at the corner, crowded by the numbers that attend the Bazaar, I felt some one suddenly take hold of my arm, and on turning round beheld Johnson. With a start of mingled surprise and pleasure, I accosted her, asking her at once a multitude of questions. My first inquiry, of course, was to ascertain if Rosalie was in London. She looked round on all sides before she replied, to be sure that no one saw her speaking to me, and then said, "Indeed Sir, I am afraid to stay here any longer, for if the Signor was to see me, I should get into sad trouble, but if you will tell me where I can find you, I will endeavour to come to you between the hours of eight and ten this evening."

I gave her my address, and she immediately hurried away; fortunate was it that she did so, for turning

quickly round the corner of the Square, I found myself abruptly face to face with Gabrielli. He evidently would much rather not have met me, but he was obliged to stop and receive my salutations, and in answer to my inquiries concerning Rosalie, said that she would be in London in a few days, but that he had not yet decided in what part of the town, he should establish himself; he added, that she must entirely devote herself to her profession, that she would not have a moment's leisure, as the rehearsals would occupy all her time. The wretch was barely civil, and escaped from me hastily, with very little of the courtesy of manner, he used to evince towards me.

Anxiously did I await the arrival of Johnson. The poor woman came at length; she was looking dreadfully thin and haggard, and her countenance was full of trouble and vexation. I made her sit down by me, and then she told me they had been some months in England, living in the neighbourhood of London; but that Rosalie was so strictly guarded and secluded, that no letter she had written was allowed to be sent to any of her friends.

"I would willingly" said Johnson, "have been her secret messenger, but I have the eye of the Signor fixed upon me with suspicion and dislike. I dared not do any thing that might incur his displeasure, for he has sworn, with the most frightful imprecations, that if I in any way disobey his orders, if he can trace to me the slightest opposition to his will, I shall that moment be dismissed from the presence of those two poor beings who, without me, I really believe could not exist. Indeed, Sir," she continued, whilst the tears streamed from her eyes, "were I to leave them, God knows what would become of them! my poor mistress, you will be shocked to hear, is in a very precarious state; a blow from that inhuman monster has produced consequences which I fear, will terminate in her death. As for Miss Rosalie, her situation has become much more insupportable, from the circumstance of that bad man having brought into the house a woman, whom I know to be of the most infamous character; she is

the sister of Gabrielli; and poor Miss Rosalie says she is very musical and clever, but oh! Mr. Leslie," continued the faithful creature, sobbing as if her heart would break, "what a sight it is for me to behold, this vile, degraded being, as I know her to be, lording it over that poor sweet innocent girl, actually tyrannizing, over her. Although Gabrielli has told you that the family have not yet come to London, you must not believe it; we have been some weeks settled in one of the most notoriously bad streets of the town, where a decent female is ashamed to show her face; and all this I am certain, is his cunning plan to keep her completely aloof from the Belmont family, and from you; what is to become of her, God only knows! and much as I love the poor child, I have brought my mind to think, that, should it please God to take her, it would be to me a less painful sight to look upon her lying at peace in her coffin, than exposed to such a life of wretchedness, as she is now leading."

My readers will imagine the state of my feelings, on hearing this sad narration; indignation and disgust were mingled with grief; and the inability I felt of being of any great use, in the present state of affairs, heightened my annoyance to real torture. It seemed dreadful to remain quiet, and to allow this poor young creature to be hurled, without one effort to save her, into that abyss of destruction, which seemed to await her. But, gracious heavens! what was I to do? how cope with that villian, who would visit upon his victim, every opposition that was offered to his infamous views. The Belmont family being away, increased my distress; there was no one to assist me with advice.

On making farther inquiries of Johnson, I found that even the comfort of poor Arturo's society was now at an end; for although they were obliged to meet professionally, Gabrielli looked with suspicion upon him, and Rosalie was so guarded by the lynx eye of the Signora Myrtilia, that she dared not speak to him in confidence. Johnson also added, that her spirits were in a very fluctuating and alarming state; sometimes she was sunk to the lowest ebb of dejection,

and at other moments, there was a wild exciting fever about her, more painful to behold, even than her former sadness; "in short," added the poor woman, "I have great fears upon one subject, which I can hardly dare name, it is too shocking—but, Sir, her mind! how will it ever stand all this tumult and disorder? when I see her acting a part all about a mad young lady, it nearly sets me beside myself, it is so dreadfully natural; indeed it hardly seems like acting."

I deliberated for several minutes, and then begged that I might have Arturo's direction; this she could not give me, but promised to send him to me if she could possibly obtain a moments conversation with him. All I could now do, was to force upon her some money, which I desired might be used, in procuring any little comforts for the poor suffering mother and daughter, and I promised to endeavour soon to see Rosalie, without compromising Johnson as having been my informant respecting their place of abode.

My rest that night was much disturbed, by the melancholy images this visit had conjured up in my disordered fancy; and the wan wretched countenance of poor Johnson was ever before me. It told a touching tale of wo and misery, scarcely needing the grievous circumstance she had related, to show what wretchedness the villanous conduct of Gabrielli, had brought on the hapless females now so completely in his power.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE next morning I rose feverish and uncomfortable, and had just seated myself before my solitary breakfast table, when the door opened, and Arturo, with his usual impetuosity, rushed into the room, and

in a moment was embracing me, after the demonstrative fashion of his own country. Poor youth! can I ever forget the wild impassioned manner in which he saluted me? his joy and ecstasy in having once more found me. "Oh, my friend," he exclaimed, "am I again so happy, as to feel myself in your presence—to see your kind countenance once more beaming upon me with looks of interest and affection;—oh! how much have I required your assistance! how have I prayed that I might soon find you! thank Heaven, the desired moment is arrived, that here you are again to succour, to befriend our unfortunate Rosalie."

He was so agitated, that it was some time before he could calm himself, sufficiently to answer all my questions. He too, poor fellow! was very much altered in his appearance; he was looking worn and dejected; the fire of his eye was dimmed by sadness, and the tones of his voice seemed languid, compared with what they had been.

The history he gave me, tallied much with that which I had received from Johnson, as regarded the wretchedness of Rosalie. He told me that, added to all the other unfortunate circumstances, he had himself quarrelled with Gabrielli, who had forbidden his ever entering the house, and that henceforth he was never again to see her, excepting at the rehearsals which were immediately to take place at the Opera house.

"Thank Heaven!" he said, "I had received my engagement, previous to having brought upon myself the enmity of this monster, or this privilege would have been denied to me; but from having sung so long with Signora Rosalie, he was too glad to exhibit her talents to the London manager, in their most attractive manner, and certainly, though I say it with all due humility, she never sang with so much spirit, as when her voice was combined with mine. Oh! those were happy days, when our music constituted her greatest solace; and the blissful months we spent, when you were in Italy, *cara signor mio!* the remem-

brance of them renders this present wretched period, still more insupportable."

On questioning him farther, I discovered that the chief cause of Gabrielli's enmity towards Arturo had commenced from the young man's extreme anger and disgust, at his having given the persecuted Rosalie completely over to the jurisdiction of his sister, the Signora Myrtilla—a woman of doubtful character and of a notoriously violent disposition. He had presumed to expostulate with the man, and had been insulted and spurned by him.

"Oh Signor," he exclaimed, as with almost frantic agitation he paced the apartment, "what have I not endured in consequence! Look with pity, I beseech you, upon my presumption, when you hear that on the impulse of my outraged feelings at seeing the sweet angel forced to exist in an atmosphere so polluted, I went to her, and on my knees declared the passion which filled my breast—my unbounded love; I even pressed her to unite her fate with mine, obscure and uncertain as it was—I urged her to allow me to obtain the right of protecting her—of shielding her from insult and degradation, and then to fly to England and claim the kindness, and assistance of her influential and attached friends; I felt that I had the means of working for her, and, oh! to be her slave—to toil for her. To devote every energy of mind and body, to procure her comfort and happiness, would have been to me the brightest of destinies—oh! what unqualified bliss!" Here his emotion became too overpowering; for some moments he was unable to proceed, and was silent.

How much did I respect this silence, dear youth, and how truly did my heart respond to every feeling he expressed! it was with breathless anxiety that I listened, whilst he proceeded in his detail.

"Rosalie heard me with an amazed expression of countenance, but when she spoke, what torture did she inflict upon me! kindly but resolutely, she endeavoured to destroy every hope of my heart; she told me that she did indeed love me tenderly—affection-

ately, and she fervently implored me to continue to her, my faithful attachment—but as a friend only—I must extinguish every other sentiment. Gracious heavens! what did she ask? little could she imagine the stormy feelings of my soul! she might as well have ordered a volcano not to emit smoke and flames—the waves of the sea to cease to roll—the sun to hide its light. No, the flame must burn constantly—fiercely, until it consumes the heart from which it rises.”

Truly did I believe him, for never did sincerity depict itself more clearly than in the every expression which fell from the lips of this devoted being; he continued:

“Arturo,” added she, “do not be so wretched on my account, for you may think it extraordinary, that at this moment, when my woes appear to thicken around me, I should be much calmer—much more resigned to my fate. I see an end to all my troubles, and whilst there is a hope to sustain us, every thing may be endured. What I am going to say, may make you unhappy now, but it ought not to do so, and I hope, in time, even you will rejoice at the prospect which is to bring me freedom, and I firmly trust—felicity; the fact is, my kind Arturo—my best of brothers, I am certain that it is impossible for me to enjoy a shadow of happiness in this world; my destiny here is sealed. Whilst I anticipated a long life of misery, I was overwhelmed—dismayed; but my views have changed, and I confidently hope that there are bright joys for me above; that the arms of mercy are opening to receive me, and that my trial will not be of long continuance. I feel firmly persuaded that I shall soon die; I bear within me the seeds of disease; I am convinced, this constant singing is destroying my lungs; depend upon what I say, I am an expiring lamp, I may burn brightly for a brief space, but quickly and suddenly will the flame of fire be extinguished; my mind, and body are equally exhausted. But, Arturo,” she continued pitying my distress—my perfect wretchedness, “do not be so unhappy—look at me, I am calm, and thanks to the God of mercies,

perfectly resigned. It has not however been without the severest struggle, that you find me as I am; human nature will rebel, and the tenacity with which—wonderful to say—we all cling to this miserable world, made me at first shrink from the idea of an early death—but the pang is over—thanks to the lessons of my beloved friend Mr. Leslie; he pointed out to me the way, and my life of trial has rendered my task of submission much more easy than if the road had been strewn with roses; and my good Arturo, have I not a blessed example—a bright stimulus, when I remember who preceded me in the path of suffering, and who has hallowed, and consecrated every step.”

“Mr. Leslie,” continued Arturo, “as the sweet creature thus spoke, her countenance appeared to shine with a degree of heavenly radiance; she looked indeed too ethereal—too angelic for this world of woe and wickedness, and her prophetic words struck upon my heart; I feared that they were but too true. I was kneeling at her feet, perfectly overwhelmed with grief. I could not speak—I could only, unmanned as I was, weep forth my sorrow; at this moment, most unexpectedly, Gabrielli entered the apartment—and what a scene ensued! His rage and fury knew no bounds. He then for the first time, felt convinced that I loved Rosalie. He ordered me from her presence, and with bitter imprecations, commanded me never to enter his doors again; never henceforth to address my sweet friend, but with the cold restraint of a stranger; and here I am, heart-broken, without one comfort left on earth but the prospect of meeting her in public, watched by the eye of malice and distrust, which renders our intercourse restricted to the most formal terms. Still I have the bliss of seeing her, I gaze upon that countenance I love so well, and my heart is not yet quite crushed—quite withered. I wander for hours, when it is too dark for me to be observed, before the house which contains my treasure; my mind too is solaced by sometimes meeting Johnson, and through that medium receiving messages of affection from the idol of my heart.”

I shook my head in dismay ; the case, indeed seemed hopeless ; and how was I to proceed ? what steps could I take to assist my poor protégée ? The only chance I saw for her, was the plan she had once before so successfully pursued ; it was again to assume the firmness which had so completely intimidated, and, in a degree, conquered the Italian ; but Arturo told me that months of continual excitement and suffering, had almost totally subdued her spirit, and her weakened health rendered her quite unequal to cope with the united persecution which assailed her.

The question now was how to gain access to her without making it appear from whom I had gained my information. See her I must, and would. Arturo advised me to go to Lafleur, and obtain Gabrielli's address from him ; at length, it was decided that this should be my first step. I felt that already Arturo's heart was lightened ; it was no small degree of comfort to him, to be assured by me that he could not visit me too often ; in short, that I expected to see him every day. With the freedom of an attached friend, I inquired into his pecuniary resources, and was glad to find he was to have a lucrative engagement at the Opera. But to his own wants he appeared indifferent ; reckless was he of every consideration, save the one absorbing, wholly engrossing feeling of his ardent heart. In vain I besought him to consider his own prospects ; he said he had none, they were all directed to one point, and when that was over, his existence would be a dreary blank—he should no longer have even energy left to live.

It was very affecting and beautiful to witness this extraordinary devotion, in these days of selfishness and luxury, when the indulgence of every appetite is the sole and ceaseless aim of the young men of the present age, who allow clubs, horse-racing, and the gaming-table, added to all other sensual gratifications to supersede the natural, and much to be admired affections of the heart. In these degenerate and unromantic times, matrimony is rarely associated with any other idea, save that of aggrandizement, so that the

disinterested, unselfish attachment of the young Italian was to me like a dream of olden times, when love and chivalry were the burden of the song. He seemed to love Rosalie the more ardently for her very sufferings. Oh! how truly I felt for him; although I saw at once, poor youth, that his case was desperate.

In my present state of mind, I could fain have believed in all that is sung and said of broken hearts, and have repeated in the words of the poet:—

“I never heard
Of any true affection, but 'twas nipt
With care, that like the catterpillar, eats
The leaves of the spring's sweetest book, the rose.”

I went instantly to the manager, and received the direction I required. It was truly a most disreputable street in which Gabrielli had taken up his abode; thither I bent my steps; I knocked, and a dirty maid-servant opened the door.

“Is Miss Elton at home?” I inquired.

“No,” was the answer.

“Then I must see Signor Gabrielli.” He also was not within, and Madame Gabrielli was too ill to see any one.

“Then,” I persisted “I wish to speak to Johnson.”

The woman looked confused, and was hesitating how she might still persevere in her falsehoods, when all farther trouble was spared by the sudden appearance of Rosalie herself, who rushed down the staircase, and flew into my arms.

My well known voice had reached her ear, and, regardless of the opposition of the odious Myrtilla, who in vain endeavoured to prevent her escape, she had burst from her, and sought the only refuge—the only comfort she could feel on earth—that of finding herself in the arms of her fond old friend.

She had no power of utterance, poor girl; she could only sob whilst she hung upon my neck; but this was for a brief moment; we were not permitted to remain uninterrupted. A woman, whom I immediately recognized as Myrtilla, appeared; she was evidently la-

bouring under great excitement of feeling, in other words she was in a violent passion, and vociferated in Italian: "This is all very improper, Signora Rasalie, you know how strict were your orders that no one should be admitted to disturb your very important studies. My brother will be very angry at this disobedience to his commands."

I expostulated with the woman, and strove to sooth her ire, although I felt, Heaven forgive me, much more inclined to precipitate her from the top to the bottom of the stairs, upon which she stood, gesticulating in an accent, to my ear, peculiarly harsh and disagreeable.

"Might I not," I said, "enter some apartment, where I could have some conversation with Miss Elton?"

She replied: "No, certainly not, unless she were also present; she had received the most positive orders from Signor Gabrielli."

"Very well," I said, "so let it be;" and following her I led my poor weeping girl into a parlour, where with looks of fury, the Signora accompanied us. This creature seemed to be little more than thirty years of age; she might be considered handsome, but to me, her countenance was like that of a demon, and her rouged cheeks rendered her fierce black eyes still more bold and piercing. Merciful heaven! what a companion for this unfortunate girl, whom I saw trembling in every limb.

I made her sit down by me, and then whispered the question, whether Myrtilia understood English.

She answered, "No."

This was so far fortunate; at least I hoped to gain some information from her, but she appeared paralyzed by fear, as this horrid woman sat opposite to her with her large fiery orbs fixed full upon her countenance.

I felt my anger rise to an insupportable degree. I turned to Rosalie, and in Italian, begged her to leave me for a few moments, that I might have some conversation with her companion. She instantly rose,

and quitted the apartment. Then I felt that I scarcely knew how I was to proceed; whether, by a strong effort, to check my passion, and endeavour to conciliate the woman, or to give way to the rage with which, I am ashamed to say, my whole soul was shaken. We were both silent for a minute, but I was soon roused by the sound of her unmusical voice:

*"Che volete da me, Signore?"**

I replied, "As a friend of Rosalie, I must, without hesitation, tell you, that you are acting most unwisely, and marring your own interests, or rather those of your employer. What is your motive for wishing to withhold from her any intercourse with the friends of her infancy? It is not my desire to interfere with Gabrielli's prospects for her; my only anxiety is to smooth the road of duty, which the peculiar manner in which she has been brought up, and her extreme sensibility, render, perhaps, more irksome than it might otherwise have been."

"Pshaw! nonsense!" she replied. "Sensibility! indeed;—say obstinacy! She is the most wilful, tiresome girl with whom I have ever had to deal—the most difficult to manage. The trouble and patience Gabrielli has had with her is not to be imagined: think of the expense he has bestowed upon her education! and now, at this critical moment, when she is just about to make her debut, what with her sensibility and hysterics, and her affectation of propriety, if we do not take care, she will be a failure after all, and then, God knows what will be the consequence!"

"Perhaps," thought I, "it might be her salvation!"

She proceeded rapidly and loudly—"Gabrielli wishes to keep her away from her friends—I, more properly, call them her enemies—that her nerves may be kept as tranquil as possible. To what has she to look but her profession, I should like to know? and what splendid prospects are hers, if she chooses to make proper use of her extraordinary talents!—foolish! absurd girl!"

* "What is your business with me, sir?"

I tried to argue with the creature ; and, at last, I think gained a little ground, by declaring that my influence would rather second their wishes, than frustrate them—that I had not come with any view of withdrawing Rosalie from her profession ; and I endeavoured to persuade her, that by allowing her free intercourse with me, I was certain both her health and spirits would be improved, and that she would be in a much more favourable state to appear before the public, than she now was.

I perceived that my words were beginning to have some effect ; but, oh ! how my heart recoiled at the idea of thus temporizing with this odious woman ! I felt that I ought to have denounced her at once ;—at once to have shown her how I detested her conduct. But I had a strong motive for my actions—the endeavour to save from destruction a soul as pure, as excellent, as the other was faulty and corrupt.

When Myrtila recovered in a measure from her fit of anger, she became communicative, and informed me that she had left a lucrative engagement at the Opera, at Milan, to superintend the theatrical education of Rosalie. She gave me also to understand, that it was a great sacrifice, and that it was solely out of regard to Gabrielli, who she said, had always been the kindest of brothers.

In answer to my questions concerning Madame Gabrielli, she related a very distressing account. She said that her complaint was a cancer, and that the worst result was anticipated.

I begged that I might see her ; but at this proposition, another dark cloud appeared upon the countenance of the Signora ; however, after a pause of consideration, she desired me to follow her, and I was soon in the presence of the unhappy woman.

I found her in the drawing-room. At her feet knelt poor Rosalie, with her head buried upon her mother's knee. It was an affecting sight !—the poor creature was changed in a surprising degree ; pain and sorrow had sharpened her features, and a yellow sickly tinge overspread her whole aspect. Johnson was standing

near them, with a countenance which indicated how fully she had participated in all the misery of the mother and daughter.

"What foolery is all this?" cried Myrtilia, as she entered the apartment; "no wonder my brother is averse to your meeting your friends, if such scenes are to be performed for their amusement!—rise, Rosalie, and compose yourself, or, depend upon it, this will be the last time I shall interfere in your behalf."

How I longed to silence the audacious woman! but I restrained myself, approached the poor girl, raised her from her kneeling posture, and whispered words of consolation in her ear. Poor Madame Gabrielli stretched out her emaciated hand to me, and said, in a low tone of voice, "I deserve all this, but that poor child;—what is to be done for her? you must never abandon her, for now is the moment she requires your protection more than ever."

An expressive glance from me seemed to afford comfort to her mind. I then asked her some questions respecting herself; what she told me, conveyed the impression that her case was a very bad one. She had scarcely any medical attendance; I promised to send my own surgeon to see her, and said that I would be answerable for the expense.

Our conversation could not flow with much freedom, for, although Myrtilia did not understand English, her shrewd scrutinizing eyes, which were fixed upon us, appeared as if they pierced into our very thoughts. I saw, however, that it was a consolation to Rosalie and her mother even to behold me—to feel that one, so deeply interested in their cause, was near them. On taking my leave, I told them to be comforted, for I was certain matters would improve. I then again requested Myrtilia to let me speak with her alone.

I told her that I relied upon her good offices to induce Gabrielli to allow me to have free access to Rosalie; and also mentioned my intention of sending medical advice to Madame Gabrielli. At this last proposition, the woman shrugged up her shoulders and

sneered, and, with a fiend-like expression of countenance, said it was of no use spending money on such a hopeless business; "for when was a cancer ever cured?" she added, with a contemptuous toss of the head.

I said, that in many instances an operation had effected a remedy.

"Very well!" she replied, "do as you will; it does not signify to me, if she had every surgeon in the universe;—I only spoke to save your money."

I left the house, but with a load upon my heart: indeed, I felt with Johnson, that there are many things worse to bear than the death of those we love; and, oh! the idea of the sweet girl I had just quitted, resting, in all her purity and goodness, with the green sod of her favourite church-yard over her, would be much less painful than that of leaving her, as I now did, in such society—with so many evils darkening around her.



CHAPTER XV.

It is my desire to be as little tedious as possible to my readers: old people are often accused of being tiresome, therefore I will endeavour to escape that accusation, and pass over many little minor events, which, otherwise, I would willingly record, and at once briefly say, that Gabrielli was induced—solely, however, from selfish considerations, to relax in his severity towards Rosalie. He at length perceived that her health and spirits were so completely failing her, that some great change must be effected, before she could gain sufficient energy to make those exertions, which would render her *debut* as brilliant and successful as he anticipated.

I was surprised one morning, by his calling upon me, and all his servile urbanity of manner seemed to have returned. He told me that I was quite mistaken

if I thought he wished to debar his dear and charming daughter from enjoying the happiness of my society, that from me, he felt certain she was always deriving advantage; it would be a comfort to him to afford her the power of taking that exercise and recreation, of which, from his various avocations, and the ill health of her mother, she would be otherwise deprived. He farther added, that in a fortnight she would probably make her appearance on the stage, and of course much practice and study were required; but all he wished, was that she should devote some hours to this necessary duty; the rest of the day was at her own disposal; and the man finished his harangue by saying, he was quite sure he could rely upon me, to impress on her mind, the necessity of obedience and exertion! it was only from the knowledge of my discretion and wisdom that he ventured to confide so implicitly to my direction a girl, so wayward and impracticable.

I could have answered him, but, for the sake of the unhappy girl, I determined to be silent, and from this hour her condition materially improved.

It was now the beginning of spring; the season was peculiarly mild and forward, and as it suited Rosalie's avocations to take an early walk, I was constantly at her door soon after eight o'clock. With what exquisite delight did she hail my appearance, and how completely like a bird just escaped from its hated cage, did she fly into the fresh air; and her step—how elastic it became! as she gradually felt herself getting more and more distant from her detested home! whilst she leant, with all the confiding love of a daughter, upon my arm; the joy of the moment seemed to clear away the clouds which sorrow had gathered on her brow.

I have always thought that griefs, however heavy, appear to lose much of their oppressive weight when we are under the influence of the fresh air of heaven;—so it was with Rosalie. It was curious and delightful to watch the change that took place in her countenance, in the course of a very short time: she

had indeed, much to tell me that was distressing, but I endeavoured to check the flow of her complaints and to make as light of every thing as possible.

There was one subject, upon which I soon discovered that she was peculiarly unhappy: it was the idea of having to go to the theatre without any chaperone more respectable than Myrtila.

"Had my poor mother," she said, "been in a state to accompany me, it would have been more bearable. I should then have known that there was one to whom I could look for support; I should have felt that there was, at least, a semblance of respectability remaining to me; but now I shudder with horror at the thoughts of what I shall be exposed to, with no one to whom I can fly for refuge; this is one of the most aggravated tortures I endure. The rehearsals as yet have been as private as possible, but still even at them, what have I not suffered? I felt that I inhaled an atmosphere of impurity. I did not see one countenance, save that of dear Arturo, from which I could extract any thing like comfort, and to him, poor fellow, I dared not speak; but I saw that he was watching me with the keen eye of painful anxiety; this adds to my nervousness, for with his fiery impetuous feelings, I am constantly dreading some explosion of his anger, should he once perceive that any circumstance had annoyed me—Mr. Leslie," she continued turning towards me, and taking my hand, whilst she bent her expressive eyes with a look of intensity upon mine, as she spoke, "there is only one circumstance which could sustain me through my trial in the dreadful hour of my first appearance, and this is *your* supporting presence; it would be to me every thing—strength and succour."

Here she paused, but her wild distended eye was still fixed upon me with an expression of fearful impatience.

What could I say? With the swiftness of thought, it flashed across my mind, that her proposition was of a most perplexing nature; the idea of a man of my sacred profession taking upon himself, the office

of appearing night after night, within the pestilential precincts of the *coulisses*, to witness tamely, and without rebuke, scenes of flagrant profligacy and vice!

At this view of the subject, I was about to say, it must not—cannot be—but then again, the sweet pure being who leant with such confiding affection upon my arm—might not it be to her, as she had so emphatically said—succour, in that time of need?

The thought that I should be hovering near her, at that trying moment, seemed her only remaining hope. I, therefore, told her I would consider her request, and endeavour if possible to comply with it.

“I know what you feel,” she replied, “I can enter into all the scruples which suggest themselves to you, but,” she exclaimed, in that excited manner, which always made me tremble, “remember, it is to save one amongst the wretched group you will meet there; for I now declare solemnly, my conviction, that if I go alone to that hated place, defenceless—unprotected, my brain will not be able to stand it; Mr. Leslie, the very idea makes it burn, and my senses become confused.”

I tried to speak, but she interrupted me and continued in a vehement manner, “Why should you hesitate? your profession, I know forbids your entering those scenes of sin and folly into which my evil destiny casts me; still there are motives, high and holy motives, which may render laudable your mingling with the most depraved. You have a trust—a work to do; the very profession which makes you shrink from following your poor desolate Rosalie to that place of lawlessness and mockery, the very thought of which makes her soul sicken with alarm and disgust, surely bids you not hesitate. Nothing, nothing can be a degradation to you, dear Mr. Leslie,” she continued with a volubility and gentle sophistry, which made me see how completely her heart was bent on persuading me to her wishes, “would you hesitate in following the humblest of your parishioners at dear Fairbourne when you knew your presence would protect, your influence guard them from sur-

rounding pollution? Surely then you will not forsake your own Rosalie; she who has loved and venerated you so long and so truly," and she pressed both her hands upon my arm with all the tender earnestness of a child. "Not that I fear their vices," she continued with a haughty tone, on my still hesitating to reply to her, "they never can touch me; but," she added shuddering—"there is a crime which haunts my imagination—which a demon seems to whisper in my ear, when amidst those people, and which tells me I could, *I can* free myself from their hateful contact;—had I but courage, I *can be free*," she repeated with the loud laugh which was so horrible to hear, whilst she still pressed on my arm more closely, and looked into my face, with eyes that almost dazzled me by their brilliancy, while their dilated pupils gave strong indications of mental disorder. "Whilst you are with me, the demon never appears: he cannot, dare not approach me when you are near; and I feel that even in that dreadful theatre, surrounded by, oh! such women, and men whose very looks terrify me, I shall be as calm as when I used to be seated on my favourite footstool by your side, in that dearly loved study at the Rectory, where all around breathed of peace, tranquillity, and goodness."

There she paused. The remembrance of that beloved spot, and the days of her past, but never to be forgotten happiness, rushed upon her imagination, and immediately gave a turn to her thoughts; her feelings seemed to lose their rigidity, and she burst into tears.

These timely drops appeared to sooth her. We were in Kensington Gardens, so I led her to a seat, and allowed her to weep on without interruption. Indeed I thanked Heaven for these tears, for they seemed as if they had cooled her brain.

But what feelings of intense anxiety filled my own heart! I trembled at the responsibility I had brought upon myself. I felt that I was placed in a most extraordinary situation; still when I turned my eyes upon the poor lovely interesting creature who sat be-

side me, and when I remembered, that in this world I was her only stay, I at once said, "Rosalie, be comforted; in every turn of this eventful world, I am yours—I will follow you through life, till death."

"Then may Heaven's will be done!" she cried, with such a rapturous expression of countenance, methinks I see it now!—There are looks and words which stamp themselves upon the heart, which are never *never* to be forgotten; she continued, "With you at my side, my constant, best of friends, I will no longer shrink from my appointed trial—I will walk firmly through the path, although thorns may be beneath my feet. I can now say, the Almighty has never forsaken me, and that he has sent a blessing and a solace in you, beloved Mr. Leslie, which plainly indicates that His hand is near me—that His eye is upon me; and I have the soothing inward feeling of hope, that through His grace my heavy task will not be lengthened—that there is a rest for me at hand, and that when that blessed time arrives, Rosalie's grave will be an honoured one—a spot which her friends may visit with satisfaction—though, perhaps, mingled with sadness; they will remember that the poor girl sunk into her early resting place with a name untarnished—that through all her trials, she disgraced not the kindness of those who cherished her—who made her childhood so blessed. Oh! in all my misery, I have moments of exquisite enjoyment; moments when I am living in a world of my own; and the most soothing fabric of my imagination that I then build, is, to fancy myself dead and buried—in that one spot you know, Mr. Leslie," she exclaimed quickly and anxiously; "then I imagine the forms of those I love bending over the simple stone their affection has raised to my memory; I hear them pronounce my name, 'Rosalie,' they say—'poor Rosalie!' I see a tear fall from the soft eye of my adored Gertrude, and that tear seems really to drop upon my heart, and to cool one burning spot which ever tortures me—oh! that tear," she repeated, placing her hand upon her eyes, "how often I try to see it—it is the only happiness I have."

I endeavoured to check her, for she was getting into that rambling, unconnected manner of talking, which often preceded any great agitation. It was not only painful for me to hear, but I knew it was injurious to allow her to indulge in such exciting fancies.

It is, perhaps, impossible for my readers to form an adequate conception of the affecting nature of the scene I have just described. The voice of the poor girl was pathos itself, the melody of her tones so exquisite, that the wild language which flowed from her lips seemed like poetic inspiration, so truly was every word mellowed by the sound of the harmonious voice by which they were pronounced.

And then to look upon her from whom they proceeded—that angel in human form! but I must check this rhapsody. It will be considered as the doting raving of an old man!

My only plan now was to rouse her, by telling her that the time was almost exhausted, and that Gabrielli would be angry if she was not at home at the appointed hour.

She obeyed me passively, but was silent, during the rest of the walk. I promised when I left her, to be with her early the next morning.



CHAPTER XVI.

GABRIELLI happened to be just leaving the house, as I turned to quit it, and, finding that he was proceeding towards the Haymarket, I requested to be allowed to walk that way with him, as I had much to say.

I told him without reserve, how alarmed I was about Rosalie, and warned him, in the most emphatic terms, against doing any thing that might agitate her; I begged him to indulge and sooth her, and to contradict her as little as possible.

I saw his countenance evince impatience but I heeded it not, and went on to mention the request which Rosalie had just urged, that I might attend her to the theatre, and my willingness to comply with it.

He shrugged up his shoulders, and I am well aware many an imprecation died away upon his lips; however, I believe he had at last become convinced that my alarm was not unfounded, and that there was indeed but one means of accomplishing his own views with regard to Rosalie, which was to have recourse to mildness and persuasive kindness. He had discovered that she possessed a spirit which would not bend to tyranny, although her heart might break in the effort. The man, therefore, gave a scowling, reluctant acquiescence, and we parted with no very amicable feeling on either side; indeed, I considered him almost in the light of a common assassin; for had he not already murdered the peace of mind of my child, while at the same time he was sacrificing her life?

This evening I had a long conversation with Arturo; the poor youth was looking wretchedly ill, and there was a degree of languor over his whole appearance, that was very striking. His large black eyes had lost their brilliant fire, even his crisp curling locks seemed to have changed their nature, and appeared to hang mournfully round his countenance. When I looked at him, as he stood leaning against the mantelpiece, his fine manly form assuming a posture of dejection, I could not help inwardly ejaculating, "Here is another instance of a blighted heart, a living specimen of the ravages which the canker worm of care produces in the human frame."

Although the youth had been nurtured in goodness and virtue in an humble sphere, still it was under the warm sky of an Italian climate, where every feeling of the heart is heated by its intensity.

The old relation, with whom he had lived from his infancy, kept him much aloof from others of his own age; he lived in strict seclusion; his poverty had

placed a barrier between him and the haunts of man, therefore, until his little savings enabled him to give Arturo a few advantages, to improve the cultivation of his natural musical genius, the young man's acquaintance with others was very limited.

At length he fell into the society of Rosalie. His tastes seemed formed by her alone—immediately she became the *beau-ideal* of that perfection, sought by his youthful imagination—his night and day dream of grace and beauty—he would never cast his eyes elsewhere to seek for greater charms. His admiration rapidly grew into love, which became too soon the sole hope of his existence.

Through the course of a long life I have witnessed many degrees of strong attachment; but that which glowed with such fervour in the breast of Arturo, was of the most absorbing character; it was particularly affecting to me, for from what I knew of its hopelessness, I felt that the end must be a tragedy.

To some hearts there are strokes of calamity, which scathe and scorch the soul, penetrate to the vital seat of happiness, and blast it, so that it will never again put forth bud or blossom.

And such, I was convinced, would be the case with Arturo.

My heart bled for him, and—perhaps I may be blamed for indiscretion—but for the moment to sooth his trouble, I told him of our intention of being in Kensington Gardens the next morning; and that if he chose it, he might meet us there.

Had I conferred upon him a principality, his gratitude could not have been more unbounded. With his own natural enthusiasm, he was in an instant at my feet—on his knees, pouring forth every demonstration of thankfulness, covering my withered hand with fervent kisses.

All this exuberance in him did not appear in the least overstrained, or unnatural; it was so entirely in character with his usual ardent manner of expressing every emotion which excited him.

Poor fellow! as he knelt before me, and I stroked

the soft curls, which grew in such beautiful luxuriance on his finely formed head, with the rapidity of thought, his future career appeared before me, and how little of happiness mingled in the prospect!

How could any one, with such acuteness of feeling as he possessed, find peace on the turbulent waves of this fitful disappointing world!

He left me elated, and comparatively happy. He went to dream of love—full of the bright hope of the morrow, and I remained to muse over the uncertainty and misery which often, with even more than usual pertinacity, seem to pursue the most excellent—the most highly gifted!

But it was not for me, a short-sighted mortal, to arraign the works of Providence. I knew that there was wisdom in every act of Providence. Man, in this mortal state, is not yet fit for happiness. He is not created for perpetual spring and cloudless skies, but by the wintry storm, is called upon to exert himself to felicity hereafter.



CHAPTER XVII.

THE next morning dawned brightly. The sun was shining with splendour, the air, even through a London atmosphere, was balmy and refreshing. At a very early hour I was at Rosalie's door and I found her, quite ready, and equipped to join me.

Her appearance agreeably surprised me; for she was very prettily dressed in a new Leghorn bonnet, which I thought became her much, and a handsome silk cloak trimmed with lace. The fact was, kind Lady Belmont had sent a sum of money for me to lay out for her, and I had given a portion of it to Myrtila, to spend for her in necessary dress. I thought it would keep the woman in good temper thus to employ her, I also considered that she would execute this commission better than either myself or Rosalie; and

certainly here she had not failed. Every thing was in good taste ; and I looked at my dear *protégée* with delight, for I am not one of those, who think that dress cannot improve beauty. I like to see a well arranged toilette ; it is lady-like, besides being becoming ;—but to go on with my story, for I have made a most old womanly digression.

We set off upon our walk. I found that Rosalie had something to purchase at a music shop in Bond Street, therefore we bent our steps towards that quarter of the town, previous to proceeding to Kensington Gardens. During our way thither I had much to tell her, which I knew would give her pleasure. I informed her of Gabrielli's acquiescence in my wish of accompanying her on the nights of her performance at the Opera house.

This intelligence did, indeed, give her joy ; she had scarcely words to express her gratitude and satisfaction. I then told her who was waiting, I made no doubt, with the utmost impatience for us, in Kensington Gardens.

This was truly delightful news, for although, to her pure mind, the warm feelings of his heart did not meet with the same return, still she loved Arturo affectionately—gratefully ; his idea was connected with the only moments of any thing like happiness, she had passed in Italy.

In the present nervous state of her spirits, extremes either of joy or sorrow, appeared to be too much for her, and I almost regretted I had said so much, when I looked at her flushed cheek and fearfully brilliant eye, and heard the hurried manner in which she spoke, and the wild laugh that ever and anon, broke from her.

As I gazed upon her countenance, I could not help thinking how splendidly beautiful she looked. Her veil was thrown back, and her open bonnet displayed, to full perfection, her lovely face.

As we went up St. James' Street, she was talking rapidly, and with much animation. We passed several clubs, and from one of them issued several

young men. Although it was at that time nearly eight o'clock, to judge by their elaborate evening dress, and the pale worn-out expression of their countenances, it was evident their night had but just ended. However, though their appearance bore the traces of hours spent in the dissipation of the gaming table, their spirits were not exhausted, for they were laughing and talking, as they proceeded, (I concluded) to their several places of abode, there, in feverish sleep to steal a few hours from the day, in order to recruit their enervated frames, for the orgies of the ensuing night.

They came towards us; but Rosalie, engrossed by the feelings which filled her mind, heeded them not—indeed, I believe she did not even see them.

The young men approached, and I perceived that, with one accord, they turned their eyes upon this unexpected apparition, of a well-dressed and respectable female, at such an hour, walking in these precincts. Rude and fixed was their gaze, and the nearer view they gained of my lovely companion, the more intense were the looks of admiration with which they regarded her.

But one of the party seemed to be more than merely casually moved by the sight of Rosalie. He absolutely gave a start of surprise, and, instead of proceeding with his companions, stood motionless, immediately before us, so that he completely obstructed our passage.

Then, for the first time, Rosalie's eyes fell upon him, but it did not appear that in any way she recognized him. He, however, seemed fascinated to the spot. My anger began to rise at the extreme impertinence of his conduct; my looks, I think, plainly indicated my feelings, for suddenly, he slightly, but respectfully, touched his hat and passed on; curiosity, however, inducing me to turn my head, I saw him standing and staring after us.

Rosalie made no remark upon this occurrence; indeed, her pre-occupied mind prevented her taking any heed of what had struck me as being somewhat extraordinary. We proceeded to the gardens without

meeting with any farther impediment, and there we found the happy, impatient Arturo, waiting for us with breathless anxiety.

He held in his hands, as an offering to the lady of his love, the most splendid bouquet I had ever beheld, consisting of the choicest flowers; he certainly must have been up before day-break, to have procured it, and, for which, I could not help thinking, he had drained the last *sous* from his scanty purse.

My readers may imagine the happiness of this meeting—all that was to be said on both sides. This, probably, was one of the most delightful moments of the poor young man's life, and, in the light thoughtlessness of youth, he forgot all his miseries—all the wretchedness he had endured.

“ There was but one beloved face on earth,
And that was shining on him; he had looked
Upon it till it would not pass away;
He had no breath, no being, but in hers;
She was his voice,—he did not speak to her,
But trembled on her words; she was his sight,
For his eye followed hers, and saw with hers,
Which coloured all his objects: he had ceased
To live within himself; she was his life,
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all!

His eye kindled with its former brightness;—his countenance glowed, and, for a brief space, he looked again the happy, heedless youth, whose beauty had astonished me on my first arrival at Naples.

Quickly did the time pass, and loth was I to disturb such joyful moments; but my watch warned me that it was near the hour that Rosalie should return. However, to soften the parting to Arturo, I promised him, that the pleasure he had this morning enjoyed should often be repeated. He was to accompany us across the Park, and then we were to part.

As we were proceeding towards the Cumberland gate, we almost came in contact with a regiment of the life Guards, which was returning to the barracks at Knightsbridge after a field day.

It seemed as if this morning, we were fated to meet with adventures. Several officers on horseback, attracted in the same manner as bees are towards some beautiful flower, hovered close to us, to obtain a nearer view of my lovely companion; and I began to be provoked with the dress she wore this day, which, I fancied, rendered her attractions more than usually conspicuous.

Amongst these gazers, I most unexpectedly beheld Lord Henry de Vere. I then recollected he had lately obtained a commission in one of the regiments of the household cavalry.

The group of officers having stared at Rosalie as long and as fixedly as in decency they could, rode on towards the troops, which were now some short distance in advance; but Lord Henry, unsatiated with the sight of the loveliness that had so attracted him, turned again to look upon her, and at that moment caught my eye.

He came up to me immediately. "Mr. Leslie!" he exclaimed, "who could have expected to have seen you here, at such a time—and in such company?" he whispered, as he leant forward upon his horse, and looked significantly at Rosalie, whom, I evidently perceived, he did not in the least remember.

I felt annoyed, for I had not wished to have introduced Rosalie to any of the younger branches of the Belmont family, until sanctioned by their parents; there was something inwardly that told me I had better not do so; I rather dreaded the encounter.

"Who, in the name of every thing that is beautiful! is she?" again whispered the young Lord. "I am perfectly expiring with impatience to know, for I never saw such a lovely creature in the whole course of my life!"

And most truly, at that moment, might Lord Henry so express himself, for, on turning my eyes towards the young girl, I saw her standing with her large, full, bright orbs fixed upon the young man—her colour raised to the brightest carnation—her faultless mouth half unclosed, and, as she bent forward, her bosom

heaving with surprise, agitation, and tender recognition, I thought certainly, I had never seen a living spectacle of any thing so exquisitely bewitching!

I had now no other course to pursue, but at once to say—"Do you not remember Rosalie?" in an instant he had vaulted from his horse, the bridle of which he threw towards me, and, in another second, I saw him clasping her in his arms, with all the tender welcome of a most affectionate brother; and Rosalie, with tears streaming from her eyes, suffered, indeed returned, the caresses of this early friend, and play-fellow of her childhood.

But, I perceived, that after this first burst of surprised emotion was over—when Lord Henry again looked upon the lovely creature he had so unceremoniously accosted—he began to feel the difference which time had made in her age, appearance, and situation.

The colour rose to his cheeks as he turned towards her, and said, in a more constrained manner—"Rosalie, you must forgive my bluntness. I ought, perhaps, to apologize;—but, good heavens!" he exclaimed, relapsing into the former freedom of past days, "when I heard your name, I thought only of my coal-black Rose—my little favourite and play-fellow of the white cottage. You are grown so tall! Who could have imagined that the little, short, sallow girl, could ever be such as you now are! Beautiful Rosalie!—no longer, indeed, the coal-black Rose, but the most perfect—the most lovely of blush roses!" and he gazed upon her with unfeigned admiration, whilst she blushed, but from pleasure—not from shame!

And where was the young Italian all this time? I actually started when I turned from the pleasing scene I have been describing, and saw him standing with his eyes also fixed upon it, but with all the fiercest passions of his soul, gleaming in the expression of his now darkened countenance. He stood with his hand pressed upon his heart, in an attitude which seemed in unison with his whole bearing, and I could have imagined that he was feeling for a stiletto, in the true

Italian style, which he would fain have plunged into the heart of the presumptuous youth, who dared thus to approach the idol of his soul.

It was a striking spectacle; and the extraordinary contrast, presented by the two youths, was worthy the pencil of an artist. They were both in their separate aspects, rare specimens of the different characteristics of the two countries. The dark fierce beauty of the Italian, contrasted strangely with the slender, tall, graceful, aristocratic looking Englishman, whose soft blue eyes, as they rested upon Rosalie—his clear fair forehead, shaded by auburn-locks, told of a life of hitherto unprovoked passions—of an existence carefully nurtured in the lap of indulgence and luxury. Tempered by the favoured clime in which he had drawn his first breath, his feelings, though warm, still were not as yet flaming with the raging fire which blazed in the very soul of Arturo, whose passions were like the ardent sun, beneath which he had existed ever since his birth.

I kept my eye stedfastly fixed upon him, and soon saw that the respect, and even the degree of awe which he felt towards me, alone restrained him. I believe otherwise, he would have rushed forward to chastise the daring intruder, who had presumed thus familiarly to address Rosalie. But he saw that I sanctioned his advances, and the pleasure which sparkled in her eye evinced, to his jealous sight, that the joy she felt also was extreme.

I watched him as he stood for some moments irresolute—in a state of the greatest agitation. At last I saw a large tear swell in his eye, as with a softened look he gazed on Rosalie; but in another instant a frown succeeded, and with an impetuous gesture, he flung the flowers he held in his hand, upon the ground, and darting off in an opposite direction, unperceived, except by me, was soon out of sight.

I did not seek to detain him, for what good could result from bringing these two impetuous youths in contact with each other! All I had to do was to pick up the unoffending bouquet, the loss of which I knew

Rosalie would deplore, and comfort myself by the determination of afterwards finding Arturo, and by explaining to him who Lord Henry was, endeavour to calm his tortured mind.

Lord Henry seemed in no haste to leave us. With the bridle of his charger under his arm, he walked with us for some distance, and, indeed, it was only when I told him that he really must go, that he reluctantly took his departure; not, however, before he had showered every kind of question upon Rosalie—where she was to be found? when he might hope to see her again? and all sorts of inquiries, which might lead to bring about another meeting.

She knew not what to say. Her soul revolted against the idea of receiving him at her wretched and disreputable home. I endeavoured to come to her relief, by telling him that she was not mistress of her own actions, that Gabrielli allowed no visitors—that when Lady Belmont arrived, I hoped to be able to bring her to see them. He then asked when she was to make her first appearance, and at this question, Poor Rosalie began to weep; it recalled to her mind every circumstance which was to her most painful—her degraded position! and then Lord Henry was all sorrow, all penitence, for having said any thing that could have caused her tears to flow. In short, this interview I foresaw would much distress Rosalie, and I resolved, at length, to terminate it by calling a coach, and putting her into it; thus we got rid of our importunate, though affectionate young friend.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE young man who had so unceremoniously stared at Rosalie in the street, proved to be the identical Sir Francis Somerville, who has already appeared before

my readers, as one of the *dramatis personæ* of my tale, and who was so struck and captivated by the beauty of a young girl whom he accidentally met on the Esplanade at Brighton. This girl, I need scarcely add, was no other than our Rosalie. Gabrielli had landed at that port, on his way from Italy, and the illness of his wife detained them there for some days. The vivid impression which Rosalie's loveliness had made upon the two young men, was easily detected by the experienced eye of Myrtila, who, on advancing to meet her, observed the whole of the little scene occasioned by the dispersion of the music which Rosalie held in her hand, and perceived that the subsequent agitation of our heroine seemed to strengthen the fascination which her appearance had wrought upon their senses.

Myrtila communicated all this to Gabrielli; and it had so chanced that in the morning he also, whilst standing in a shop, had recognised the person of Lord Fitz-Ernest, who was passing at the time.

The Italian had always peculiarly dreaded the interference of this young man. There was something in his dignified demeanour, which awed the ruffian. He, therefore, immediately resolved to lose no time in leaving Brighton, in as private a manner as possible, in order to avoid any meeting. Thus it was, that the pursuit of the two young men had been so completely baffled. However, the impression Rosalie had made upon the imagination of Sir Francis was so durable, that even after a considerable lapse of time, when he met her in St. James's Street, his senses exhausted and fatigued by the past vigils of the night—his head confused by the copious draughts of iced champagne, to which he had constantly flown for support, under all the harassing chances of the hazard table—still he recognised her in a moment, and seemed at once sobered and recalled to himself, by the re-appearance of the vision, which had so long haunted his fancy.

Had it not been for his evening dress, he would no doubt have retraced his steps and followed her—so intensely anxious was he to discover who, and what she

was. I suppose my silver locks, and sable suit appeared to give a warrant to her respectability—to say nothing of a ray of innate purity which seemed to emanate from the expression of her sweet countenance. But still, in his own mind, he felt certain that there was some mystery attached to her, which, to fathom, he would at that moment have staked a great deal; but at present he had no other course to pursue, but to return to his bachelor home in Hill Street, and there endeavour to recruit his feverish frame by sleep and rest.

It suggested itself to him, during the operation of undressing, that his servant, who was an old and well tried assistant in all his pleasures, might be able to help him in his present dilemma. But no—how could he? there was not the slightest clue whatever to the discovery. He must even leave it to chance—to his usual lucky stars. He would watch at the club door every day, at the same hour in which he had met the beauteous unknown, as long as the season lasted; on that point he was quite determined, but whilst ruminating upon this, as well as upon many other plans, equally absurd, he fell fast asleep, dreaming, of course, of the lovely form which had thus disturbed his peace of mind, although, in his visions, she might appear to him sometimes perchance with my clerical shovel-hat upon her head.

It so happened, that night, there was a state ball at St. James's Palace, and although our Baronet never went to such amusements, if he could possibly avoid them, his clubs having far greater charms for him, he was obliged to attend the command of his sovereign, and there he met the young Lord Henry de Vere.

Sir Francis was intimately acquainted with the Belmont family; indeed, he was very nearly connected with it; and though, from his dissipated habits, the Marquis and Marchioness had hoped their sons would not be thrown much into his society, circumstances had frustrated this wish, and the cousins had been a great deal together.

The two young men were standing rather apart from the rest of the company, both silent and abstracted. I believe, from what I have since heard, that their thoughts were equally engrossed by the same subject. Lord Henry, I am certain, was thinking, as he cast his eyes upon the brilliant beauties that floated before him, radiant in dress and diamonds, that with all their external advantages, there was not one to compare to the splendid loveliness of the interesting creature he had seen that morning, and his mind was dwelling with dangerous fervour on each lovely feature of that bewitching countenance. He blushed—yes—more than once, when he remembered how he had folded her in his arms—how freely he had pressed kiss after kiss upon her cheek. Could he ever dare to do so again? No! he felt that indeed he dared not. He had accosted her as the little Rosalie of bygone days; but now—he sighed, and there was much of bitterness in the sigh, when the conviction—the too great certainty—flashed across his mind, that never again might he consider her in that light; an inward pang, at that moment, suggested to him, that for his safety, he ought never to look on her again.

And Sir Francis—what was the subject of his meditation, as he stood, moodily, with his arms folded, and his brow contracted?

We had, perhaps, better not endeavour to ascertain his inward aspirations. A life of profligacy and self-indulgence had probably rendered them less amiable than those of the young Lord, who was still fresh and uninitiated in the ways of sin. Sir Francis had lived a short life of pleasure, and had now almost exhausted its resources. Abundance of wealth had hitherto procured for him every gratification, but still he was not satisfied.

When we enter a gay and festive assembly, we behold every appearance of sparkling felicity. Alas! if we could look into the hearts of this seemingly joyous company, how inconsiderable a portion would be found truly happy. At the best, the flashes of mirth, which burst from the dissipated and careless, are of a

transient and broken kind, interrupted by reflections they cannot avoid. But a truce to moralizing.

The appearance of Rosalie was a new incitement to Sir Francis, and, as is always the case, the difficulties which appeared to surround his farther acquaintance with her, quickened his anxiety upon the subject. At that moment, all his possessions seemed inadequate to his present wants. What was the use of youth, health, riches, if they could not procure happiness? there must be always something wanting to complete it.

The meditations of both the young men were interrupted by a group of other loungers, who joined them, and Sir Francis was thus accosted by one of the party:

"What is the matter with you to-night, Somerville? you look completely floored. However, I don't wonder at it, for I never saw a man so perfectly cleaned out, as you were last night, at Crocky's. I left you the loser of—I dare not say how much, and I hear you were there till the middle of the next day. I suppose that makes you look so lackadaisical."

"Really," replied Sir Francis, drawing up his tall figure to its utmost height, and looking very stern and dignified, "I cannot imagine what concern you can have in my losses; pray be so good as to leave my proceedings alone."

"Come, don't be in a rage, my good fellow, and I will tell you a piece of news which will brighten you up. What do you think of my having, by the very utmost stroke of good fortune, gained a sight of the new prima donna; and, by all that's divine! she is the most beautiful creature my eyes ever looked upon."

"Do not torment me, Templeton," replied Sir Francis, half turning away; "I know, pretty well, the style of your beauties, with their red cheeks, flaxen locks, and staring blue eyes. I suppose she is the facsimile of the fat Columbine who robbed you of your heart, last winter."

"Well, you need not be so bitter in your remarks

upon her; if she did not suit your taste, there were many who thought her a devilish fine girl. And I have a good mind, just to punish you for your impertinence towards the pretty Fanny, to give you no farther information upon the subject of this new star, whose brilliancy would, I am certain, dazzle even your well practised eye."

"Well, come, I'll give you leave to tell me all about her," said Sir Francis, his features now relaxing into a smile; "for I see you are bursting to communicate all you know; and, to bribe you to smooth your feathers, which I see I have ruffled, I will say that, after all, Fanny is not so very fat, nor so extremely blowsy, but exactly the sort of beauty I could have imagined most likely to captivate Augustus Templeton, Esq., just caught fresh from the county of Tipperary."

The young man would have fain walked fairly off, evidently nettled at this ironical speech; but Sir Francis, whose curiosity was now raised, laughingly caught him by the arm, and held him fast. After a little persuasion and coaxing, he at length restored him to good humour, and brought him again upon the subject of the prima donna, which appeared to be certainly the uppermost idea in his empty head.

"Well," he said, "you know Lafleur makes a monstrous fuss about any one being admitted at the rehearsals, just at this moment, for there are two debutantes, who he expects will produce a greater sensation than ever yet has been made on the English boards. One is a man, who is to play the principal parts—the other, a girl, whose voice is more than divine;—something beyond your comprehension, Sir Francis."

"Doubtless, I do not pretend to be such an exquisite connoisseur as yourself, Mr. Templeton; but pray go on with your story, for I am in haste to be off."

"Well, the other morning, on passing the Opera-house, a sort of determination seized upon me that I would get in, by hook or by crook. I was refused in every possible manner, which only made me the more

resolved to gain my point. So, at last, I found a man I know something of, a kind of understrapper about the theatre, and gave him all the money I had in my pocket to get me in; and he smuggled me into a box, where I sat behind a curtain, just peeping out, now and then, for I dared not, for my life, have been seen. For my sins, I had to wait an immense time, while they were rehearsing some other opera, and I could see nothing but the old set—of whom I am heartily sick.”

“Come, get on,” said Sir Francis, impatiently, “what a prosy way you have of telling a story.”

“I must tell it my own way, or not at all,” replied Templeton, pompously; he saw that he had excited the curiosity of Somerville, therefore it was his turn to give himself airs: so he continued in his own tiresome manner;

“At last, the stupid thing was over, and they commenced “*Nina Pazza*,” the piece in which, I believe, the new *cantatrice* is to make her appearance. I sat upon tenter hooks, scarcely daring to breathe, lest they should discover me, and drag me out before this new divinity appeared; at length she came.”

“Well!” exclaimed Sir Francis, and also Lord Henry, who had approached, and was listening with the most earnest attention.

“At first, I was disappointed; I hardly thought her so *very* beautiful, for she was as pale as a marble statue; but the more I looked at her, the more she seemed to kindle into life, and the lovelier she became; such eyes, Somerville!—certainly not like my poor Fanny’s; they were dark and large, with an expression in them which thrilled through every nerve in my system—it was really like a shock of electricity. After she had sung some time, with a voice like that of a syren, her colour began to rise, and no tint of any rose that ever grew, could excel the beauty of its hue.”

“And her figure,” demanded Somerville, “is she tall or short?”

“Rather tall and slender, but gracefulness itself.”

"And her name? for I forget it, although it has been announced."

"They call her the Signora Rosalia Gabrielli; but I can tell you that even from the cursory view I had of the girl, it seems to me that she will be no easy conquest, Master Somerville; and my friend who got me in, told me that she is an odd young lady, distant and repulsive to the utmost pitch; she refuses to open her lips, except to sing; and beautiful as she is, no one dares to speak to her; there is a flash in her eye which keeps every one aloof. However, I think she may be a sly one, for I saw her cast *les yeux doux* upon that handsome young fellow who sings with her; indeed they seemed to act the lovers, *con amore*. I'll tell you what, we shall all die of envy of this Vivaldi, who is as splendid a personification of beauty as the girl; all the women's heads in London will be turned by him; and men with light hair will have no chance," here he passed his fingers through his own locks, which grew in profusion, but were of that colour which partakes of the suspicious hue of ginger; "however, I have found out a mode of getting introduced to her, for I used to know in Italy the sister of this very Gabrielli. She was then a chorus-singer at San Carlos, but is now living with her brother, as a kind of companion or chaperone to the beauty; and you will see, if I am not soon her favoured admirer. But what, in the name of all that is wonderful is the matter with you, De Vere; you look so fierce and so much offended! Are you already jealous, even before you have seen the fair one?"

"Pardon me," replied Lord Henry, most haughtily, fire flashing from his eyes, "there you are in error. I have known the young lady, with whose name you have taken such gross liberties, from her childhood; she was educated with my sisters; and were it not for the misfortune of her mother having married Gabrielli, she would not have been thus exposed to insult; as it is, her position is not such as to level her to the grade of other women of her hated profession; therefore, Mr. Templeton, I must insist, that, at least, be-

fore me, you will henceforth use more discretion when you name the Signora Rosalia, or I, as the friend of her youth, shall consider myself bound to resent the outrage;" with these words, he walked away, and soon disappeared amidst the throng, leaving the others surprised by this sudden burst of anger.



CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Lord Henry left the brilliant assembly, his heart was filled with a crowd of mixed feelings, which were both painful and undefinable. He was almost inclined to play the woman, and weep, when he thought of the poor girl, as she had been in past days, and contrasted her present degraded, unhappy condition, with the blissful period, when she was the cherished friend of his sweet sister Gertrude, the indulged, the favoured pet of the whole of his excellent and virtuous family. He recollected her in the joyful thoughtless days of their childhood, and her merry laugh seemed to ring upon his ears; the scenes so loved of his own dear home at Belmont—all appeared to rise before his imagination, and his affectionate young heart was heavy.

As he slowly bent his steps towards Knightsbridge, (for the night was so lovely, that he dismissed his cab,) thought after thought occurred to his fancy, but they all turned to one point—it was the fair image of Rosalie which haunted him; and how his heart smote him, when he recollected that he, who would now have laid down his life to serve her, had often caused her tears to flow; when in past days with his mischievous tricks—his tormenting antics, her enduring patience had been sometimes overtaxed, and then the sweet forgiving manner, with which she ever received his overtures of reconciliation. "Poor beautiful Rosalie!" was his inward sigh; "and now she

is wretched, forced to pursue a course which is hateful to her—ill-treated—exposed to insult continually.”

His blood boiled with indignation, when he remembered the words of Templeton, and more than once did he turn, with the intention of retracing his steps, to execute summary vengeance upon the contemptible wretch, who had in such a manner dared to name her.

The loveliness of her appearance had made a vivid impression upon the mind of Lord Henry and most certainly much increased every feeling of interest which already had found a place in his heart; and torturing—maddening was it to hear her pure name bandied by a profligate, and ranked amongst those unfortunates who had forfeited all claim to respectability. To think that the chosen friend of his sister was henceforth to be a mark, at which the base designs of licentiousness, were to be levelled!

All this I heard from himself afterwards, and with the frank ingeniousness of his nature, he described to me the sensations of indignation and sorrow that filled his generous heart.

He was with me early the next day, and forced me to give him a long detail, of every circumstance concerning Rosalie.

On the subject of Arturo he was peculiarly curious, and I, with my usual openness, told him the story of his hopeless love; but after I had been thus communicative, I began to think, I might just as well have been less candid; for there was a kind of flash of satisfaction, which passed over the countenance of my attentive listener, when I declared my conviction, that Rosalie's heart was untouched, which rather disturbed me, and after this dearboy had left me, I felt uncomfortable. I wished we had not met him in the park, thus prematurely introducing that fascinating Rosalie to a youth so full of the ardour of his age. I had hoped to delay all interviews with her, till Lord and Lady Belmont were in London to sanction my proceedings.

It seemed to me that I was accumulating troubles for myself, as well as others, and I was vexed and

perplexed. Then I began to think of poor Arturo, who had quitted us in so abrupt and disconsolate a manner. I was uneasy at his non-appearance. Those young people were certainly fated to be the torments of my life! I had not seen Rosalie that morning, for she was particularly engaged at home, with many details all concerning her appearance on the Saturday week following.

I grew very fidgetty towards the afternoon, about the poor Italian youth, and at length determined to seek him at his own lodgings. They were in Greek Street, Soho, and thither I directed my steps.

I found that he lived over a music shop, and on reaching it, had to make my way up to the very top of the house, before I arrived at the door of his apartment. I knocked, but received no answer—I knocked again—all was silent. I then thought he must be out, and was turning away, when it occurred to me to try the handle, and at least ascertain if the door were locked. It opened immediately, and I entered the miserably furnished room. In one corner stood a bed, and on casting my eyes towards it, I saw Arturo lying upon it in a deep sleep. I approached. He was dressed, and from the position he had taken, it appeared to me, that he had thrown himself down overcome by fatigue, and in that manner sleep had overtaken him. His countenance was dreadfully pale, and even then exhibited symptoms of grief. I glanced round the apartment; every thing about it looked desolate and miserable, save the flowers, which it was his delight to collect, for the purpose of being able to send a bouquet occasionally to Rosalie, and upon which I have heard, he spent almost every shilling he possessed. I recognised a bird that had formerly belonged to Rosalie, but which she was not allowed to bring from Naples. Arturo had begged to have it, and carefully had he treasured it.

I felt very sad as I cast my eyes around, and thought of the many melancholy hours the poor devoted youth must spend in loneliness and sorrow. I seated myself by the side of his bed, determining there

to watch for the moment of his awakening, for I knew that my presence would afford him comfort.

I had not long to wait; after two or three restless movements, with a deep sigh, he opened his large eyes, and fixed them with a kind of bewildered gaze upon my countenance. He evidently, at first, thought my appearance was one of the confused dreams which had been haunting his imagination, but by degrees his senses became more clear, and starting up, he seized my hand, exclaiming, "*Oh caro mio amico, e siete dunque venuto a consolarmi?*"*

Poor fellow! I soon discovered what I had feared. The occurrence of the preceding day had almost distracted him, and to my consternation, I found that food had not passed his lips, for more than four-and-twenty hours. There was to be a rehearsal that afternoon, and I feared that he had not strength to make his appearance.

My first step was to procure him some nourishment, and for that purpose, I immediately went down stairs, to make interest with any servant I might find, to bring him some breakfast. This accomplished, I told him I would come to him again, in the course of an hour, which I did, and had the satisfaction of seeing him, in all respects, much better.

I took that opportunity of gently admonishing him, upon the subject of his impetuosity I pointed out to him, how much he must have hurt Rosalie's feelings, by leaving her so abruptly, and added that had she seen him cast her bouquet so unkindly on the ground, she would have been indeed distressed, and in the present nervous state of her spirits, those who loved her, ought to strive to save her from all unnecessary agitation.

I then proceeded to enforce upon him, that Lord Henry was the friend of her childhood; she had grown up with him as a sister, and with a sister's degree of affection she regarded him. I endeavoured to extract from him a promise, that in future he would

* Oh my dear friend, are you then come to console me?

try to govern his ill-placed sensibility. He shook his head doubtingly.

"My friend, my father," he said, with a mournful pathos in his voice, which went to my soul, "if you could only imagine the raging fire which burns in my heart, you would then be able to understand what fuel to the flames was the sight of her, whom I so fervently adore, in the arms of another, and she, great God! enduring the caress, and looking upon him with eyes beaming with tenderness, such as she never bestowed, on her poor devoted—idolizing slave Arturo. Shall I ever cease to remember, without torture, the joy which illumined her whole countenance? *oh signor, caro signor*, through the long and weary night, whilst with disordered steps, I paced the narrow precincts of this apartment, that look of hers, and the triumphant happy aspect of the audacious youth, who dared thus to press her to his heart, was ever before my imagination; it has assumed the form of a vision, which seemed to follow me—to mock at me."

All this was uttered by Arturo, with a tone of voice, a countenance and gesture, that rendered the words most emphatic. I trembled as I listened to him. Fierce indeed, were the passions which blazed in his nature, and to what might they not lead! Shuddering, I turned my mind from contemplating horrors that suggested themselves to my fancy.

I felt that I had little power to calm his irritated mind, but I endeavoured to sooth him, by those only means, which I knew were most likely to soften the intensity of his present feelings.

In a degree I succeeded, and we walked forth together towards the Haymarket, where there was to be a rehearsal, and where we should also meet Rosalie.

* * * * *

People talk of the anxieties—perplexities and responsibilities caused by the possession of a large family. Truly can I enter into their feelings! And I, an old bachelor, who might have passed through

life with that degree of negative happiness which belongs to the state, had brought upon my foolish self, trammels and troubles, as exciting and painful to my mind, as if I had been the father of a dozen children.

But these young people had so completely identified themselves with my nature—my whole heart, and soul were so entirely given up to their cause, that now there was no retreat for me. I must continue the course that I had commenced, and although, certainly, the future looked dark and gloomy, and forboding fears often caused my heart to sink, still I felt so deeply involved in their interests, and my affections so warmly engrossed their welfare, that truly was I convinced, their destiny was my own fate.



CHAPTER XX.

THE Belmont family had arrived in Piccadilly. This I learnt in a little note from dear Lady Gertrude, begging me at the same time to come to her immediately. Most happy was I to obey the summons, and I found her, as usual, all kindness and affection, evincing the pleasure which she really seemed to feel, in welcoming again, her old and devoted friend.

I soon discovered that she had much impatience, and curiosity upon the subject of Rosalie, for she had heard from Lord Henry that she was in London, and was full of anxiety to know when she might see her.

I told her, that really I dared not give her any hope at the present moment. There was so short a time intervening before the period when she was to make her appearance; and in the critical state in which I considered her nervous system, I said that it would be more prudent, and even more kind, not to add to it by any fresh excitement.

Lady Gertrude was grieved and disappointed. "I do so long to see my darling little Rosalie," she said; "but by the by, I hear she is no longer to be so named;—indeed, Mr. Leslie, my womanly curiosity is excited, and even, if possible, adds to the great desire I have to meet her again. I never heard any thing like the glowing description Henry has given me of her beauty; and you know, that much as we loved Rosalie, we never thought her so very pretty. Her eyes certainly were always splendid! and my brother tells me, she is tall—how incomprehensible that appears! My idea of her is the remembrance of a dear little dark fairy, who used, in spite of every thing, to bewitch us all—old and young, by her sweetness—her cleverness, and indescribable fascinations; I feel that she is a different person. I almost regret this very great change, for it now seems that I shall have to make her acquaintance over again—so totally must she be altered."

I reminded Lady Gertrude that if she had only chosen to believe me, she would long ago have been reconciled to this alteration; but, I added laughing, "I am sure you all fancy I look upon those I love through a magnifying glass, and that even their size I exaggerate."

"Henry is very angry," she continued, "that you will not allow him to have another sight of her, and he talks a great deal about a handsome young Italian, who, he says, is in love with Rosalie;—now do pray tell me all about it, dear, good Mr. Leslie, for you know how interested I am, in all that concerns her." I did so. I gave her a minute detail of poor Arturo's feelings; and warmly—with intense interest, did she enter into the whole of the perplexing affair.

"I wish I was married," exclaimed this charming creature, "then I should feel at liberty to take some decided step with regard to this poor girl; as I am now situated, mamma has scruples upon the subject, and, of course, I must respect them—but still, something must be done—and indeed, dear mamma is as anxious as I am, that what she now endures, may be

ameliorated—but I wish to save her, if possible, from the hands of those dreadful people into whose power she has fallen.”

Dear young lady! how my heart responded to all she said! But still I repeated that at this moment nothing could be done, and that I thought the kindest plan was to keep her in ignorance for the present, of the near vicinity of those she loved so well. However, Lady Gertrude was not thus to be satisfied, and at length it was arranged that Mademoiselle Kramer should go to Rosalie. She might be supposed to have preceded the family to London, and to her, Lady Gertrude could entrust the charge of discovering all her little wants—what might, at least, contribute to her personal comfort. With the delicate foresight of her sex, she imagined a thousand little things it would please the poor girl to possess, and with which she could so easily supply her, and then, the wretched mother—to her also she might be of some use.

Sweet, excellent girl! I inwardly prayed that every blessing might be multiplied to her; for her kindness to the unhappy Rosalie was not a mere emotion—a glow kindling and fading in a moment; it was a steady principle, displaying itself in tender assiduity, in real and decided acts of friendship.

Lady Gertrude then told me of a circumstance which afforded me the greatest delight. It was, that every thing was now arranged for the marriage of Fitz-Ernest with Lady Constance. This was, indeed, joyful intelligence, and I had an opportunity, in a few moments, of making my congratulations personally to the bridegroom elect; for having heard that I was with his sister, he hastened, with his usual warmth and affection to meet me.

My felicitations, upon the subject of his marriage, were heartfelt and enthusiastic. He seemed gratified by them; but I who had become a regular “Paul Pry” into the feelings of others, imagined (I hoped then it was only fancy) that he looked almost too calm upon the occasion. I could not perceive any of the little confusion—the agitation of the ardent lover,

and I began to turn it in my busy brain, that, perhaps, he had been talked into this marriage, and that probably, although he admired the excellence and amiability of the young lady, passionate love was still to come. His feelings, at present, certainly were not those of great *empressement*.

On asking when the happy event was to take place, I found it was not to be for some months, owing to Lady Constance being still in deep mourning for her mother.

Lord Fitz-Ernest soon changed the subject, and began to ask question after question about Rosalie. When could he see her? was his anxious exclamation; for it appeared as if Lord Henry's vivid description of her charms had excited the curiosity of all the family.

I again entreated that at present she might not be disturbed by any thing that would agitate her so much, as seeing her friends; and even on the day she was to appear, it would be kindness in them not to be there; but to that, Lord Fitz-Ernest would not listen.

It made me quite fidgetty to see the degree of anxiety he evinced to meet my beautiful protégée, and, foolish old man that I was, I began to feel quite jealous for Lady Constance, so that my manner became perplexed and confused; Fitz-Ernest perceiving this, laughed at and bantered me upon the subject; and was so unkind as to say, that notwithstanding my gray hair, he should begin to suspect I had some motive for thus withholding this hidden beauty from other eyes than my own; in short he made me angry and cross, and I went away dissatisfied with myself, and thinking I had never seen my favourite Fitz-Ernest to so little advantage. As I walked home, I believe I was muttering to myself "how these young folks do plague me—my hands are too full—I wish I had nothing to do with them."

But then I thought of poor defenceless Rosalie, and my heart smote me for the idea.

CHAPTER XXI.

My readers may now transport themselves into the habitation of Sir Francis Somerville.

It was in the drawing-room that the breakfast service was laid; and a scene more replete with luxury can scarcely be imagined. The apartment, although not of large dimensions, was lofty—the furniture exquisite. No expense had been spared to collect every article of *virtù*. The choicest pictures graced the walls; and, although the subjects were not altogether those which the chastest mind might have chosen, still, they were beautiful—enchancing to the senses of those epicureans in enjoyment, who frequented the bachelor abode of Sir Francis Somerville.

It was noon; but the Baronet was still in his loose brocaded silk dressing-gown—his feet luxuriating in Turkish slippers, and he was half reclining in the most voluptuous of *fauteuils*.

"Bring another cup and saucer, Gustave," he said languidly to the French servant, who was hovering about the room, as if in expectation of receiving some fresh orders from his master. "I expect some one to breakfast; and pray tell Lopresté to send some of those cutlets that were so much liked at Melton last winter; and mind he does not forget the sauce, with that slightest *souppçon* of garlic. I must put that fellow Templeton, in good humour," he continued, half aloud to himself, as the servant withdrew, "and the only way to his heart is through his stomach;—but how late the animal is," he added, looking at a *Breguet* clock which stood on the mantel-piece. "I hope he is not going to give me the slip, for I must and will see this new girl at the Opera-house, without delay, before she has been gazed upon by all London. I also am determined to be introduced to her, and Temple-

ton is the only tool I can, at this moment, use for the purpose. What a state Henry de Vere was in about her! I certainly am an extraordinary fellow!" continued to apostrophize Sir Francis, smiling at his own conceit—

"To one thing constant never."

"I declare, the description of this beauty, added to the desire, which I cannot help feeling, to throw over any one of those pretended saints, the Belmonts, has inspired me with such an ardent wish to be the first to enjoy the smiles of this new divinity, that there is nothing I would not give to realize it. Oh! woman! woman! what mischeivous little devils you all are!"

A sharp, loud knock put an end to this soliloquy, and, in another moment, the door was opened, and in walked Augustus Templeton, Esq., followed by some servants, bearing several covers, amongst which was a most fragrant dish of cutlets, with other delicacies of this elaborate and *recherché* breakfast. The very sight and smell of these dainties seemed to rejoice the inmost soul of Templeton.

"Upon my word," he said, rubbing his hands, "you'er a very good fellow, Somerville, to recollect my favourite dish; what a breakfast I shall make! for this long walk across the Park has made me just as hungry as if I had had a run with the Quorn hounds in Leicestershire!"

Then down he sat, and, as Sir Francis beheld with impatience the manner in which he partook of every thing that was before him, he plainly perceived, that until his hunger was appeased, there was little use in asking him any questions. Nothing could turn his eyes from his plate, and his mouth was always much too full to enable him to articulate. At last, the eager Baronet saw what he hoped was the last mouthful, swallowed by his voracious friend, and then he could not help saying—"Really, Templeton, I am glad that you have enjoyed your breakfast; but, upon my word, if you go on in this way, you will assuredly die of

apoplexy before the year is out—what with that short neck and red face of yours!”

“Very flattering, certainly!” replied the other, starting up, and placing himself before the glass, whilst he endeavoured to stretch his throat out to its utmost dimensions; “and as for a red face, my colour, I flatter myself, is the hue of health. I can tell you, I should be confoundedly sorry to look as thin and lantern-jawed as you do, Somerville, although I believe you fancy your sallow looks are extremely interesting.”

“I sometimes imagine they are considered so,” rejoined Sir Francis; and the calm tone of self-satisfaction with which he pronounced these words, proved that, indeed, he thought so.

“But, Templeton, *mon beau garçon*,” he continued; “never mind looks. Our beauty,” he added, in a conciliatory tone, “is of a different style; but, of course, my good fellow, I do not mean to say that yours may not be infinitely preferred in certain quarters; indeed, I am convinced your little fat Fanny would not have looked at me, after she had once cast her eyes upon that beau-ideal of beauty—a beauty she might have before *dreamt* of, but never seen realized, until she beheld the too attractive Augustus!”

Templeton looked delighted.

“Come, come, my dear boy; this is rather too strong,” he exclaimed. “I dare say you are only quizzing.” But still he kept his eyes on the glass, and employed himself in arranging his cinnamon-coloured locks—brushing up, so as to make the most of his whiskers—altering the set of his neck-cloth—in short, *making himself up*, as much as possible, to represent the fine fellow he inwardly believed himself to be.

Sir Francis saw, reflected in the mirror, the pleased countenance of the silly dandy, and thought this was the moment to strike, for the iron appeared extremely hot.

“By the by, Templeton, you said last night, that

you were going to the rehearsal at the Opera-house this morning. I want you to take me with you."

"Quite impossible! it is with the utmost difficulty I can get in myself;—and really, you must excuse me, Somerville," he added, very pompously; "it would entirely put me out—derange all my plans confoundedly."

"Nonsense! now, just listen to me, Templeton, and don't be a fool. I not only intend that you shall take me there this very morning, but I also insist upon your introducing me to the Signora Myrtila, for I am quite determined to make the acquaintance of this *cantatrice*. Now, hold your tongue, and save yourself the trouble of speaking," (seeing that his companion was about to interrupt him) "you know very well, you find your *devoirs* to the little Fanny sufficiently expensive, and you may be certain, that, to get on with this Signora, you would have to pay through the nose, which, I am quite aware, you cannot do; therefore, without any farther hesitation, you must just go with me to the Haymarket, and, as we pass Storr and Mortimer's, you shall, as a reward, choose any thing you please—in moderation, remember—for your nimble toed goddess, and, of course, I will pay for it; and, depend upon it, that will be much wiser than trying to make a fool of yourself in a quarter where you cannot have the remotest chance of success. My dear fellow, recollect the old adage—'You must creep before you can climb.' You have begun, prudently, at the very lowest step, and it will be some time before you can expect to reach to such a height as the *Prima Donna* of the Italian Opera."

Templeton looked irresolute. He scarcely knew whether he had better not play the part of the offended man; however, his eyes fell on the breakfast table. The remembrance of all the past *feeds*, of which he had so often partaken, and the visions of future ones checked the current of his anger; the long purse of his friend also, which had often been of such essential service to him, flashed upon his recollection.

He therefore only said:—"Upon my honour, you are

too hard—too *exigeant*; and nothing would tempt me to accede to your very preposterous wish, were it not for the spite I feel towards that young de Vere. I think his impertinence to me was beyond any thing I ever met with; the idea of making such a fuss, and standing up in such a manner, for the reputation of a girl, who is the daughter of such a profligate as Gabrielli, and whose companion, Myrtila, every one knows to be as bad as she can be; it is really quite absurd, perfectly ludicrous; if he were not such a boy," continued the bullying Irishman, looking very fierce, "I should have been tempted to chastise him for his insolence."

"Oh," said Sir Francis, laughing, "pray do not trouble yourself; for, perhaps, after all you would come off second best; and I cannot spare you at present, *mon cher*—you are the most useful friend I possess."

"Well, well," rejoined Templeton, with much importance of manner; "then pray go and dress, for if I am to take you to this place, it is very near the time we ought to be there, and my friend promised to be on the look-out for me. But I say, Somerville, you must pay him also—remember that."

"Very well, I am prepared," replied the Baronet, as he left the room to adonize, leaving his guest to amuse himself with the looking-glass and the *débris* of the breakfast, upon which he would fain have made another attack, as there was still a cutlet remaining, which looked very inviting, but the officious servants entered at that moment, and every vestige of the repast was soon removed.

Sir Francis was not very long in making his appearance, and they immediately sallied forth. Templeton took care that the visit to Storr and Mortimer's should not be forgotten; and, not only did he choose a present for Fanny, but some smart pins and a set of flaming studs for himself; a ring of large dimensions also struck his fancy, but Sir Francis dragged him away.

"Upon my word," he said, "I think you have done

very well for one morning; the ring must wait for some other time, when you have earned it by fresh deeds done in my service."

With hasty steps, they now proceeded to the Hay-Market, and without much difficulty, the two young men found themselves seated in a box, concealed as much as possible by the curtain.

The rehearsal had not yet commenced, and they sat, for some time, in the dark and dingy theatre, impatiently waiting for the drawing up of the curtain. Somerville was silent and abstracted, and his companion, who was, perhaps, a little oppressed by the breakfast he had just eaten, was more than usually inclined to be taciturn. At last, however, being of a peculiarly curious disposition, he was roused by the noise of a box-door opening on the opposite side, into which some one entered, but that was all he could discover at the moment; for, whoever it might be, seemed, in his turn, also desirous of remaining incognito, as the curtains were immediately drawn, and the new comer was quite invisible.

"I say, Somerville, I wonder who that is, who has seated himself in the box opposite? I dare say, with the view of poaching upon the manor which we wish to keep for ourselves;" but no answer did Templeton obtain; for at that instant, the rehearsal commenced, and Sir Francis had neither eyes nor ears, but for the performance.

It was, indeed, with almost breathless anxiety that he waited for the appearance of the *cantatrice*. Arturo was the first of the new singers who presented himself.

"That's the fellow I told you about," exclaimed Templeton; "is he not disgustingly handsome?"

"He is, indeed," replied Sir Francis, "his cast of countenance is splendid; and what a voice! But is that the prima donna?" he exclaimed, taking hold of Templeton's arm with a gripe which made him shrink, and must have left, at least, the impression of his five fingers upon his flesh.

"To be sure it is; but pray do not hurt me so horribly, and do not speak so loud."

He need not thus have enjoined silence, for Rosalie then commenced singing; and Sir Francis, really quite pale from the sudden surprise, beheld before him the beautiful being who had so long troubled his fancy, for whom he had so assiduously sought—but in vain. Silent he now sat—motionless—entranced; his delighted senses revelled in ecstasy. The melodious strains, which proceeded from such lips! he had never heard any thing so exquisite—and oh! how lovely did he consider her! His eyes were fascinated to the one object, and fruitless now were all Templeton's endeavours to edge in a remark. Whenever he opened his lips, Sir Francis, with a glance of impatient anger, desired him to be silent; and after it was all over, he still remained for some moments fixed to the spot; suddenly he started up, and giving the astounded Templeton a most friendly although, at the same time, electrifying clap upon the back, exclaimed:—"Now, old boy, if you do not contrive, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, to gain for me an introduction to that angelic creature, you will hear that I have blown out my brains, and you will lose your best friend; for, remember, if you do what I wish, there is nothing you may not command in return."

The two virtuous friends were now in the street, but they were still hovering near the doors of the theatre, whence the performers had not yet issued. Presently Rosalie appeared, leaning on my arm, but her thick veil was closely drawn over her face, and a large mantle perfectly enveloped her form.

"Who is that old quiz, I wonder, who always seems to attend her?" exclaimed Sir Francis.

They had not time to make any farther remark while we remained, for as Rosalie was very much fatigued, I soon put her into a coach, and we drove off. But when Gabrielli, with Myrtilla leaning on his arm, advanced, they were immediately accosted by Templeton, who had known them formerly in Italy, and then followed the introduction to Sir Francis.

This was the first step gained towards the completion of the base project, now the engrossing idea of the vitiated mind of Sir Francis. How little did he contemplate the perfect subversion of his plans; how little did he then anticipate the dominion, which purity and high principle would exercise over the licentious feelings of his heart!



CHAPTER XXII.

It is again in Lady Gertrude's morning-room, that I am about to assemble some of the *dramatis personæ* of my story.

Lady Constance had been passing the whole day with her future sister. It was a pretty sight, the interior of this chamber, and as I looked round upon all the lovely young creatures, who were so gracefully pursuing their various occupations, I began to compare the scene with classic associations. Was it not like unto the Temple of Muses?

At a window, sat one of the beautiful sisters, busily employed in drawing. Lady Constance had just risen from the harp, and was still leaning silently against it. Methought, as my eye fell upon her, that her countenance was clouded; certainly a pensive cast overshadowed it, and I turned instinctively to Fitz-Ernest, who was also in the room; but he appeared deeply engrossed by the book he was reading.

Lady Gertrude was at her embroidery-frame; and as I admired the beauty of the design she was tracing, she smiled and blushed, and half whispered that it was for a waistcoat for Alandale.

I had scarcely been in the room more than a few minutes, when the party was increased by the entrance of Lord Henry, whom I had not seen for some

days. - Almost immediately that he saw me, he exclaimed: "Mr. Leslie, how is Rosalie?"

At the magic sound of this name, all eyes were directed towards me, and I perceived that Fitz-Ernest directly threw his book upon the table, and fixed a look upon my countenance, which conveyed the expression of intense interest, but he still remained silent.

Lord Henry continued the theme, by saying:—"I have been at your lodgings fifty times, at least, and I never find you at home. Is it not hard," addressing his sister Gertrude, "that Mr. Leslie will not let us see that beautiful Rosalie; it is dreadfully tantalizing, just to have one glimpse of her, and no more. Fitz-Ernest," he added, seeming to wish to prolong the subject which appeared the one that engrossed his imagination, "as I have before told you, there never was any thing so lovely as Rosalie—much too handsome. I have been wretched ever since I saw her; she is so infinitely too good for her situation in life, and she seems to feel it so acutely! Mr. Leslie," he continued, turning towards me with quickness, "I trust, indeed, that you watch over her, and never leave her; for it distracts me, when I think to what she will be exposed."

"It is truly a hard case, a crying shame," exclaimed Fitz-Ernest, with strong emotion; "and it is absurd, Mr. Leslie, your wishing to prevent our interfering at this moment; my presence had always the effect of frightening Gabrielli into good behaviour. I shall go instantly to my mother and consult with her upon the subject;" and thus saying, he quitted the room abruptly, leaving a disagreeable feeling in *one* heart, certainly; for on looking at Lady Constance, I saw that she had turned very pale.

A silence of some minutes ensued, and then the conversation again reverted to Rosalie. With much concern, I perceived that Lady Constance continued to seem uncomfortable. Her eyes wandered towards the door, hoping, no doubt, to see Fitz-Ernest re-enter, but he came not.

"Dear Gertrude," she at length said, in a tone of voice, which told of nervousness, "I must return home. It is one o'clock, and I promised papa, to call for him at Kensington at three. I can walk, if you will allow a servant to accompany me."

"But, Constance," replied Gertrude, "I thought you had ordered the carriage to come for you here? You must go down to luncheon, which has just been announced;—but," she continued rising and approaching her, "you look pale, dearest. What is the matter, darling sister?" for she now perceived tears falling fast, from the soft eyes of her charming friend—tears which Constance was vainly endeavouring to repress and conceal;—but the tender words and caresses of Lady Gertrude, seemed completely to have the effect of opening some hitherto obstructed flow of emotion, for leaning on the bosom of this affectionate girl, she wept bitterly.

How I hate to be the witness of tears, whether they proceed from man or woman—young or old—the beautiful or the ill-favoured!

At this moment the sight of them was most peculiarly disagreeable to me;—they appeared doubly painful—wholly unnatural. The fair being, from whose eyes the pearly drops chased each other in such quick succession, seemed so little formed for sorrow. The favoured child of fortune! and yet with every seeming joy brightening around her—the lovely heiress to wealth and rank, still—in heartfelt sorrow she wept.

When the heart is pained by that shaft, which always wounds the most deeply—*doubt* of the love of one, upon whom we have leant, with the whole weight of affection—where shall it, at that sad moment, turn for relief? Will it find comfort in the recollection of honours and titles, or in the contemplation of surrounding treasures?

Talk not of the honours of a Court. Talk not of the wealth of the East. These, in the hour of the soul's bitterness, are indeed spurned as nothing. Every earthly joy, in comparison with the treasure of

true affection, is no more than an empty pageant—a feeble reed, which affords no support—a house of straw, that is scattered before the wind!

Lady Gertrude full of concern for her sweet friend, led her gently from the apartment. “Constance is not well,” she said; “I remarked that she has looked ill all the morning.”

We will not now follow them into the sacred privacy of the dressing-room. We will leave them to pour forth, to each other, their confessions and their consolations, and revert to one, who had caused this tragic scene, and who had left it so abruptly.

I have hitherto represented Fitz-Ernest to my readers, as my favourite young friend. I have said that as a youth, he was of a more serious and reflecting character than his lively brother, and certainly, although, at this moment, I was a little angry, I still must ever have declared, that a more noble, generous heart, never beat in a human frame. But still, where did we ever meet with perfection in this world of sin?

Fitz-Ernest was after all but human, and human passions throbbed as warmly in his bosom, as in those of persons who were perhaps more demonstrative in their feelings. His mind was softened and improved by education, and a strong sense of religion had deeply rooted itself in his nature. That his engagement with Lady Constance was, at first, the result of a desire, to fulfil the earnest wishes of his family my readers may have imagined; but he did not offer her his hand until his affections had been gained by his farther knowledge of her perfections. He always admired her as a delightful girl—as a sweet engaging creature, still love *had* formed no part of his thoughts; but after being intimately acquainted with her for some time, one by one her excellencies dawned upon his imagination, and soon he felt convinced, he could love her as a wife, and that, in gaining her affections, he had met with a companion, whose presence would gild and adorn every future year of his life.

This was all as it should be; and if untoward cir-

cumstances had not unfortunately occurred, to alter for a space, the current of this feeling, which, though perhaps, of a calm nature, would have strengthened and increased ten-fold, when time, and a still nearer acquaintance with Lady Constance, had revealed the real lustre of the treasure which now modestly veiled its own brightness, there might have been no check to the happiness of this amiable girl.

“But the course of true love never did run smooth;” so it is said and sung—and certainly at this moment, Lady Constance felt, with anguish at her heart, that Fitz-Ernest, whom she loved with all the devoted warmth of woman’s nature, was altered in his manner—colder—unlike what he was when she existed with him in a world, “to her of ecstasy” in the lovely shades of Belmont.

With the quick and true perception of a loving woman, she instantly detected the abstracted look—the eye more frequently averted, than fixed upon her countenance. This morning particularly, she had marked a difference that agonized her. Fitz-Ernest was so grave—so silent. Her performance on the harp, which was really beautiful, and had hitherto elicited such praise, now seemed almost unheeded; or the first exclamation of applause which escaped his lips, did not satisfy her exacting heart. In vain his favourite airs were played—the song he so much loved—sung—with oh! what feeling! by her to whom he was betrothed; he appeared only to become more melancholy.

We often assist in the creation of our own miseries, and unhappily for the peace of mind of Lady Constance, she had formed one in her own imagination;—this was no other than a shrinking dread—a trembling jealousy of the attractions she heard ascribed to poor Rosalie.

Oh! how I wish I could with truth declare, that she was unjust towards her affianced Lord—that there was not a shadow of foundation for such an idea; but as the historian of this tale, I must be true—I must relate all without reserve or partiality, although even

now my heart aches and revolts against saying a word, which will bring to light the only weakness that ever appeared in the character of my dear, and favourite young friend.

The truth is, Fitz-Ernest's curiosity had been much excited by his brother Henry's account of Rosalie, and the interest he had always felt in her welfare—the love that still warmly glowed in his kind heart, towards the little pet and play-fellow of his childhood—all combined to render him most anxious to see her.

I wished to do every thing for the best, but in my zeal to do good, I blundered sadly. I ought not to have cast such a veil of mystery and romance over the poor girl, which is always inflaming and exciting to the mind of the young. I ought, at once, to have invested Fitz-Ernest with the character he would have been delighted to assume—that of her friend and patron—her protector. I acted, Heaven knows! with the best of motives, but the results were not such as I had hoped.

Fitz-Ernest perceiving that I was determined to postpone the time of his meeting with Rosalie, half out of playful opposition, and urged by a strong feeling of curiosity—resolved to gain his point, and see her without my assistance. For this purpose, he thought no opportunity would be more favourable, than that of gaining admittance to a rehearsal, and forthwith made his way into the Opera House on the same morning, and in the very same manner, in which Sir Francis Somerville and Templeton, found access to the theatre.

When he first seated himself in the box, which commanded an excellent view of the stage, the uppermost feeling that excited him, was a degree of malicious pleasure, at having obtained a victory over me, and he laughed to himself, when he thought how completely I had been overreached. Then succeeded the anxiety of expectation and curiosity. He longed to see the little Rosalie appear in her new character. He did not entertain the slightest doubt of the exaggera-

tion of my description of her beauty. I was always accused of making gods and goddesses of those I loved—Venuses!—Adonises!

“And Henry,” thought Fitz-Ernest, “he is just at the age to think every woman lovely, who is not absolutely the contrary.”

It was, therefore, in the true spirit of criticism, and with the determination to be amused, and to be enabled to have a good laugh at my expense, that he awaited the performance which was about to commence. Arturo, as I have before stated, was the first to make his appearance, and upon this subject Fitz-Ernest could not but allow, that I had not said too much. His heart keenly alive to the fascination of music, became softened—every feeling affected by the powerful influence of the melody, the cadence of which was of so touching a nature;—his rapt senses were now absorbed in listening attention; for a moment, every thing else was forgotten, so completely was his mind engrossed by the young actor, who now stood before him.

But how can I describe the extraordinary burst of surprise—the shock of amazement I may say, for thus with his own lips he afterwards described it to me, when the heroine of the piece at length appeared before his incredulous eyes. He was so astonished—so bewildered, that he felt for a moment, as if the beatings of his heart were suspended.

There had been a vision of loveliness, which for some time floated before his imagination. It was, however, one on which he had not dwelt. Lady Constance even, on that point, might have been satisfied; but it had often rather pertinaciously suggested itself to his memory, like the remembrance of some striking picture, some beautiful landscape, once seen, and never to be forgotten. It was strange, for he had ceased to think upon it. His daily increasing affection for Lady Constance had filled his mind with her mild and attractive image, and a life of tranquil happiness with her, bounded his views for the future. Still—and he thought it a strange coincidence—in his dreams sometimes, he saw the countenance of the

beautiful girl he had so casually met at Brighton; but on waking, the impression it had left upon his mind, was only imperfect, and he smiled when he recollected the circumstance, and thought upon the eccentric nature of these visitations of sleep.

But how can I express the astonishment he felt in recognizing in the actress who now presented herself to his view, the mysterious beauty who had so interested his every feeling at Brighton;—to obtain one more glance from whose eyes of splendour, such as he had never before looked upon—he had so anxiously sought.

He gazed at her fixedly—with intensity. He examined her countenance through his opera glass, and then, like a flash of lightning through his memory, the recollection of Rosalie dawned upon him. It was she indeed, but oh! how changed! how beautiful.

And then she sang. With what thrilling ecstasy did he listen to a voice—unequalled—a voice which, once heard, must ever vibrate on the ear—a melody never to be forgotten!

He listened, and he gazed, till at length—he confessed to me—in the darkness and solitude of his place of concealment, the lovely sight of this sweet girl, at times, was obstructed by tears, which would rise ever and anon. “There was something,” he said, “so mournfully beautiful about her—the pathos of her notes so touching—so melodiously melancholy!” Genius exemplified itself in every action; and how truly did she feel each word she uttered. Fearfully natural was her acting. As she proceeded in her part, Fitz-Ernest felt his whole frame quivering with agitation; he was deeply affected.

Then did all he had heard from me occur to his memory—her sufferings—the harsh treatment she had endured—the wretches with whom she associated; and with grief he remembered the reverse of this sad picture.

He thought of her, in her past happiness; he recollected her confiding love towards himself—the time when he was to her as a brother—when she was

wont to fly to him for protection, for comfort; and even on his bosom to weep forth her childish sorrows. Poor, poor Rosalie! and his arms could no longer afford her shelter or support!

If we could have penetrated into the recesses of his heart, we should have found many a stedfast vow there breathed of devotion to her cause. The affianced husband of Lady Constance, in that moment of excitement, thought only of being the friend, the champion, of Rosalie.

Following the impulse of his feelings, fain would he have instantly sought her; but, fortunately, he recollected my words—that agitation to her, at the present moment, would be most injurious, most fatal; and, indeed, when he looked again upon her speaking countenance, there was marked upon it an expression of such indescribable wretchedness—such despairing, hopeless misery—that he was held back. He felt that, truly, this was not the time to come forward, but befriend her he *would*.

To do my young friend justice, I must add, that it was as a tender, devoted brother that he thought of her; no unworthy idea crossed his imagination. But, alas! alas! how dangerous, how excitable, are the fascinations of the gentler sex over the susceptible heart of man!

Fitz-Ernest dreamt not of sinning against his promised bride, when he gazed with such tender admiration upon poor Rosalie; but still, how did this interview affect his general conduct? Was he not, during the course of that evening, sad and silent—*distrail*? All around him appeared common-place. The routine of life he beheld in his family, so replete with luxury, with comfort; all upon whom he cast his eyes tasting the full cup of enjoyment, whilst Rosalie—the beautiful—the highly gifted—was struggling with difficulties, with miseries! Every thing seemed to him tame, insipid. His thoughts were fixed, with too much tenacity, on the soul-stirring scene he had that morning witnessed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FITZ-ERNEST had expected to see me that evening; but there was a large dinner-party at Belmont house, and, as I disliked mixing with strangers, I did not go, and he was disappointed.

We did not meet until the next morning, as I have before mentioned, in his sister's apartment. After the disappearance of Lady Constance, we were all silent and grave. I rose, shortly, to take my departure. As I was slowly descending the staircase, I heard a quick step behind me, and presently a voice, which I knew to be that of Fitz-Ernest, pronounced my name.

"Mr. Leslie," he said, "if you are going to walk, I will accompany you."

I could not say no; although my heart yearned to tell him, rather to go to the sweet girl who might be, even then, weeping and in sorrow; but I felt that I had no business to interfere between the lovers.

Silently, we walked for a short time, and then Fitz-Ernest asked me in which direction I was bound. I told him I had intended to return to my rooms, but, that, if he pleased, I would go any where with him.

"Oh, no!" he answered; "let me go home with you, for I have much to say."

I was living in the Albany, therefore we soon reached my apartments. Immediately on entering, Fitz-Ernest flung himself listlessly upon a sofa and took off his hat. As my eyes fell on his countenance, I remarked that he looked very ill, and pale, and that a harassed expression pervaded his features.

"Mr Leslie," he exclaimed, "I scarcely closed my eyes the whole of last night. I have been indescribably wretched. You will, no doubt, be much surprised, when I tell you it is the sight of Rosalie that has conjured up all this discomfort."

"The sight of Rosalie!" I exclaimed; "and where may you have seen her?"

"Why, my dear Sir," he continued, "a little spirit of contradiction, mingled with other feelings, prompted me to determine to steal a march upon you, and obtain a sight of your hidden gem. Heaven knows!" he added, with strong emotion, "I have been punished for endeavouring to counteract your views; for, upon my word, the idea of that poor girl, in her present miserable condition, has haunted my mind. Gracious powers! how lovely she is! how bewitching! She cannot," he continued, with a warmth of manner, which appeared to kindle, more and more, with every word which passed his lips, "she really *must* not be allowed to persevere in a life of such risk—such imminent peril—to one so beautiful, so highly gifted. It perfectly distracts me, when I think that she, who, as a child, was so good, so innocent; whose early years were spent under the eye of my excellent mother; the companion of my pure sisters, should now, so totally against every dictate of her heart every inclination of her nature, be placed in a situation, where she will be the mark at which every libertine will presume to aim. I cannot bear it!" he cried, with great agitation; "since I have seen her, all my old associations have revived; I feel as if one of my own sisters was about to be sacrificed; and, at this moment I would stake a great deal—aye, a *great* deal" he again repeated, "even my life to protect her!"

I trembled at these words, and, as I watched the speaking countenance of Fitz-Ernest, my heart sank, and I inwardly ejaculated—"Unfortunate Rosalie! did I not always foresee misery wherever you were concerned? I knew not how to reply. I sat speechless, and truly uncomfortable.

"My dear Sir," he continued, speaking rapidly, and with energetic fervour, "my excellent friend—the friend of Rosalie, you must assist me in saving this interesting—this unfortunate girl; and do not deem the scheme I have to suggest wild or visionary. Were I not just now peculiarly situated, I should not hesitate what course to pursue. I declare to you, that in the character of an anxious brother, I would take her away, either by fair means, or, if that failed, by any other that would ensure her escape from that monster, Gabrielli. Did I not see his diabolical countenance even on the stage during the rehearsal—his brutal manner towards her, when any thing happened to go wrong in the performance; once, I saw him seize her *so* roughly by the arm, that the blood curdled in my veins; and, oh! I shall never forget the terrified expression of her features! The wretch!—I am certain he hurt her, for she coloured and shuddered. She looked like an affrighted deer, with those large, melancholy, gazelle eyes; and when the man loosened his grasp, what a dart she took across the stage, towards the young Italian, the new actor, as if she flew to him for protection! It might have appeared like acting to other beholders, but I, at once, saw it was a frightful reality. Gracious Heaven! what a history of suffering I read in that short space of time! Now, Mr. Leslie, listen to my plan. I have formed it as if it were for one of my sisters—Gertrude—Geraldine, or any of the others. There is money," he said, laying down a well stored note-case, "and to any amount I would, too gladly, be answerable, so you perform my will. You have access to Rosalie, so, before it is too late, take her away. Go abroad—I will find a place of security for her; but, in the name of humanity, remove her from the destruction that awaits her here. Leave all the arrangements to me, if you will only consent to accompany her. But, why do you shake your head? Do you really mean to insinuate, that with all your boasted love for this poor girl, you cannot thus far exert yourself?"

I now spoke. I tried to impress upon his mind the

nature of her engagement—the confusion her non-appearance would create—Gabrielli's fierce rage, which would vent itself in revengeful cruelty on the unhappy mother. I recalled to his recollection, that Rosalie was under age, and consequently, in his power, by law;—that he would seek her in every corner of the globe; and, should she again fall into his hands, what then would be her fate? I tried all my powers of eloquence to persuade him, that, for the present, our most prudent plan, with regard to her interest, was to allow matters to take their course; but I could not convince him, and, with grief I say it, we parted in anger. The boy whom I had loved so long, who had ever, till now, evinced, towards me, such respectful affection, left me with the averted look of dissatisfaction.

“Good morning, then,” he said, most haughtily, his form assuming additional height, as he drew himself up, in proud displeasure. “On your own head, may all the misery I anticipate, rest. Rosalie—the child of your adoption—she, whom you professed to love so well, is on the brink of a precipice, and you will not so much as stretch forth your hand to save her; scarcely can any one imagine the snares which encompass her.—You may live to repent not having taken my advice.”

So saying, he quitted the room. And in what a state did he leave me! I will confess it, though it may appear unmanly—childish—I leant forward towards the table, near which I was sitting, and, burying my face within my hands, wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was Thursday evening. On the following Saturday Rosalie was to make her *debut*. She had long anticipated the event, and the constant preparations for it had brought her mind into a resigned state, with regard to the momentous epoch. Having gained the great point of my presence and protection, half the terrors which encompassed the undertaking appeared to have vanished; and, moreover, there was a kind of morbid indifference about her, evinced in all her actions when not absolutely on the stage, which seemed to have deadened—to have benumbed, as it were all her faculties.

When removed from the influence of the eye of Gabrielli, she generally sat in moody silence. Her usual seat was a low stool, by the side of the sofa on which lay her suffering mother; and there she would remain, for hours, unoccupied. A book, perhaps, was on her knees, but it was observed that she seldom looked into it. Her large distended eyes seemed fixed on vacancy; but, should Gabrielli suddenly enter the apartment, then would she start up, and fly to some occupation connected with her calling.

I was astounded by her acting; as I have before remarked, it was fearfully beautiful. Were the scenes she portrayed, mournfully pathetic, then she was, indeed, herself—the sad—the heart-broken Rosalie; her own sorrows were exemplified; every word appeared to flow at once from the agonized recesses of her heart.

The effect she produced surprised even me; while they whose well practised ears and eyes had seen so many theatrical exhibitions, were affected, were riveted with rapture and astonishment. The sensation

it caused me may easily be imagined, but, I own, I scarcely expected to witness tears, even from some of the oldest stagers.

I have seen them, after a rehearsal, go up to Gabrielli, and, with the fervour so energetically expressed by their language, congratulate him on the treasure he possessed—"the star of splendour"—"the rich prize"—and then, how did it sicken me, when I glanced at the triumphant countenance of the villian. He had purchased it at a dear price.—A victim had been immolated at the shrine of his avarice.

But, when it was all over—the curtain dropped, and the illusion vanished—in the automaton figure who stood before me, the inspired actress could scarcely be recognised. It seemed as if she had been wound up for the performance; as long as it lasted, and the eye of her tyrant was upon her, her energies were all alive; and, oh! how fearful did she appear in those scenes, in which she had to personify, either rage, revenge, or madness!

She was no longer Rosalie—the young—the lovely—the innocent; but the maniac—the fury; and, shuddering, I turned from a sight, which, though splendid as to acting, grated on my feelings. Could it be true?—could it be possible, that a creature like her, so full of soft—of tender affections, could feel, even in imagination, the semblance of the passions she pourtrayed? But, when the burst of enthusiasm was extinguished, with it all animation fled;—she was a passive image.

I used to take her home, and consign her to the care of Johnson, and then she was placed upon her bed, where she lay quietly, but not asleep. She seldom closed her eyes—but she spoke not—moved not.

It was on Thursday as I said before. Rosalie was seated at her accustomed place close by her mother's side. She was bending over a book, and her features were almost totally concealed by the masses of dark hair, which hung in ringlets over her face. Myrtilla entered.

"Rosalie!" she said, "you must come with me; it

is Signor Gabrielli's wish that you should go with us to-night to a musical party."

Rosalie looked up, and fixed her eyes upon the Signora, with a kind of bewildered stare.

"It is time to prepare, so pray get up and rouse yourself."

"But what is it that I am to do?" said Rosalie in a distressed and petulant tone of voice; "the rehearsal is over; what more is required of me? I am weary, why may I not go to rest in peace?"

"Fool, obstinate idiot!" muttered the woman, but she looked at Rosalie, and at a glance, saw that there was gathering upon her countenance, that nameless, indescribable expression, which foretold a state of mind that baffled even her management; therefore softening her accent she said, "Come, *carissima*, you will be so surprised when you see the beautiful dress I have prepared for you."

"I want no dress, save one," replied Rosalie in a low gloomy tone.

"Well, why did you not express your wish, and your taste should have been consulted. In general you appear quite indifferent upon the subject."

Rosalie's only answer was a wild unnatural laugh, which sounded painfully upon every ear that heard it. Johnson told me, it was with the greatest difficulty, that at length Myrtilla prevailed on her to submit to being dressed. She tried coaxing and kindness, but it was only at last accomplished, by the threat of Gabrielli being sent for to enforce his orders.

Poor Johnson described the scene as being very heart-breaking to witness, for Rosalie was so totally unlike herself; the resistance she made was of a character so new—so completely at variance with the usual mild submission and resignation she displayed on every occasion. It plainly indicated that all was not right, that mental disease was increasing.

However Myrtilla by perseverance, and a tact which might have been admired in a better cause, performed her part to perfection; and the victim was

decked most beautifully for the sacrifice ; lovely indeed I heard she looked, but truly sad, to those who understood the expression of her countenance. And when, on her brilliant toilette being completed, she again sunk on her accustomed seat, again appeared dead to every surrounding object, except the plaintively uttered wants of her suffering mother, to whom she was always most assiduously attentive, there was an opposition between her occupation and appearance, that scarcely needed the fixed wild look of her beautiful eyes, to bring to the alarmed heart the idea of insanity.

CHAPTER XXV.

TAKING advantage of the license which belongs to biographers, and who certainly, in many cases, appear to have at their command that very valuable possession, Fortunatus's wishing cap, by that means transporting themselves to every nook and corner, and even penetrating into the inmost recesses of the minds of those whose characters they wish to portray; with this most useful freedom of a privileged narrator, I will again request my readers to fancy themselves in Hill street, at the abode of Sir Francis Somerville.

The drawing-rooms were brilliantly illuminated; luxury and splendour, although on a small scale, were visible in all directions. Every thing was appropriate, the luxurious *fauteuils*, the sofa, which seemed to court repose; the sparkling gems of virtù, both modern and antique, with which the tables were covered; all was in keeping with the magnificent decorations of the apartment. The lights were placed so as to bring out to the greatest advantage the striking merits and beauties of the selection though they were for the most part, voluptuous pictures, which graced, or more truly speaking disgraced the walls, hung with the richest silk; and the large mirrors reflected back images at whose shrine the voluptuary might offer incense, but from which the eye of modesty must turn with outraged feelings.

The master of the house at this moment stood alone, in the midst of all this blaze of luxury, and it must be allowed that he looked formed to enjoy all the vanities

of this world, and the blandishments of pleasure. Few with him had been the dark and solitary hours of life, which might have recalled him to reflection; he had hitherto met with nothing that could destroy the dangerous illusion, and he believed he had no other business on earth, but to spread the feast, and call on the harp and the viol to sound. There he stood, the sole possessor of this bright scene of enchantment, a smile of triumph played on his lips, and his eyes looked animated with joyful expectation. And yet, were we to read the thoughts that filled his mind, the images which there presented themselves were those of vice—vice glorying over every principle of virtue.

No doubt or fear ever for a moment suggested to him, that the sound of the harp and viol might some day be changed to the note of wo; that the serpent might come forth from the roses where it has lain in ambush, and might give at some unexpected moment the fatal sting.

To look at Sir Francis Somerville at the period I now describe, it might be imagined his inward aspirations were couched in those words so beautifully appropriated to a voluptuous infidel, and given with so much poetical spirit in the Wisdom of Solomon.

“Come on, let us enjoy the good things that are present; let us fill ourselves with costly wines; and let no flower of the spring pass by us, let us crown ourselves with rose-buds ere they be withered; let none of us go without a part of our voluptuousness; let us leave tokens of our voluptuousness in every place, for this is our portion, and our lot is this.”

A knock at the door was heard, and in another instant, in bounced Templeton.

“Well, *mon cher*, I see you are all ready—all prepared for conquest, deuced cleverly got up, you are certainly; and yet I don’t know how it is you manage to look so well, for your dress is not very showy. Just cast your eyes upon my waistcoat, is it not handsome? I can tell you it is new for the occasion, and abominably extravagant too.”

"If you will indulge in gold and silver, you must expect to pay for it," said Somerville, looking for a moment, with contemptuous disgust, upon the gaudy attire of his friend; "but where is Fanny? I thought she was to come with you."

"Oh! she will be here in a minute; but by the by, I heard you had ordered the carriage for the Gabriellis, so I just took the liberty of desiring it to be ready half an hour sooner, and to bring her here first. I was sure you would have no objection, and I thought it would be more comfortable for Fanny, than a dirty hackney coach, particularly as she is rather in a fuss about her new pink satin dress. But, Somerville, how splendid these rooms look! I have never seen them lighted since they were newly furnished. Bless me! I often wish I was a woman;—what a fuss men make about the little angels! I should not object to change with many, I know."

Somerville laughed—he thought of Templeton in petticoats.

"By the by, Somerville—whom do you expect to-night?"

"Not another soul, but a few of the Opera people; as it is, Gabrielli made the greatest favour in the world, of bringing the *Rosalie*, and I promised not to invite a stranger of any description, save yourself. Not that I had the slightest wish or intention of doing otherwise. I am determined to give myself every chance with that beautiful creature, whom the more I think of, the more I admire; there is something so very peculiar about her appearance—her style altogether. I really feel quite nervous, whilst in expectation of her arrival; perhaps she may not fancy me. These beauties give themselves the airs of empresses—crowned queens are not more exacting, more tyrannical and capricious, than they generally are."

"I think you need not have much fear upon that subject, and I will give you every assistance in my power, my good friend," exclaimed Templeton, in a most patronising accent, whilst as usual he admired

and adjusted himself before the glass; "and one thing I promise—I will not interfere in your views, by making myself too agreeable."

"Ah!" exclaimed Sir Francis. "I had almost forgotten to request you to conduct yourself properly, and not to be so cursedly officious. To let you into a secret, I only asked Fanny, that she might keep you in order, and here she comes to perform her duty," cried Sir Francis, as a loud knock proclaimed an arrival.

Shortly afterwards the door opened, and Miss Fanny entered—the very fac-simile of what one would imagine to have been the goddess of Templeton's idolatry; and certainly when after the preliminary ceremonies of introduction were over, and she was finally seated upon one of the Persian ottomans of this *recherché* apartment. Fanny looked a little out of place. Her appearance did not quite accord with the harmony of refinement, which breathed throughout this temple of taste and costly luxury.

She had a well made, active little figure, although inclined to *embonpoint*; her petticoats, in the true Columbine style, were short for the prevailing fashion, and her white satin shoes were rather dirty; but she had on a very smart dress, with a profusion of showy ornaments, all extremely like the chosen gifts of the gaudy looking Augustus. Her ample bust was very much exposed, and her light hair was made to fall in quantities of thin wiry ringlets on each side of her rosy cheeks. Taking her altogether, she was certainly pretty, but very vulgar.

Sir Francis, who with all his sins, was most perfectly high bred, and gentlemanlike in his manners, received her with scrupulous politeness; and the little lady was soon at her ease. She kindly expressed her admiration of all she saw around her.

"Lord! what a beautiful room," she said; "but upon my word, Sir Francis, your pictures are rather *he fie*," and she pretended coyly to turn away her

head from the figure of a Venus, which was suspended before her.

I shall not edify my readers with the conversation that ensued. Those who have frequented society, such as I have been describing, may easily imagine its tone; and those, whose better fate it has been, not to mix with such characters as I have just portrayed, will, I should imagine, gladly dispense with any other record of it.

Sir Francis soon became listless and abstracted, smiling occasionally at the sallies of the sprightly Columbine, or as we may now designate her the *figurante*, for she was exalted, by having received an engagement at the Opera house. Still her words scarcely reached his ears, so preoccupied were they, by listening to the sound of every carriage as it passed the house. Several arrivals took place, but they were not the Gabriellis. Monsieur Lafleur and a few others.

At length, the well known roll of a peculiarly hung London carriage, was heard dashing up to the door; the prancing impatient horses, driven so dexterously by the scientific London coachman, and then the prolonged knock of his own important footman. Sir Francis rushed towards the door, and stood in breathless agitation. It was thrown open, and Gabrielli entered, leading in Rosalie, followed by Mrytilla.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Yes, Rosalie the pure minded—the innocent, was thus led without the slightest pang of compunction, into this gilded nest of corruption. She was beautifully drest. To do Myrtilla justice, she had at least shown exquisite taste, in the choice of the apparel with which the poor girl was adorned. She wore a dress of soft white crape most gracefully trimmed, over a rich satin petticoat. Her sole ornament was a bouquet of choice and bright coloured geraniums. Her splendid black hair was arranged with the utmost skill in the classic style, which so well became the Grecian form of her head; but instead of being braided as usual on her forehead, was allowed to fall in long luxuriant ringlets. Her appearance was certainly most striking from the perfect elegance of her bearing, and her excessive loveliness. Her complexion was of a description which lights up to the greatest perfection—that olive hue, which in the morning, when not animated by colour, is perhaps less beautiful, at night is of the richest tint.

As Rosalie entered the drawing-room, her countenance wore a surprised, an affrighted expression. She had previously suffered much from the annoyance and excitement of a circumstance so totally unusual, as having to dress and prepare, for she knew not what, at so late a period of the evening. Her energies had already been exhausted by the labours of the morning, and she was weary, as well as sick at heart. Besides which, she was always suspicious—always upon the look out for some dreaded ordeal, through

which she would be obliged to pass—some fresh indignity or contact with people, of whom she felt a shrinking horror.

In her present state of mind, she was but too much inclined to prejudge all those she met; she considered them all *en masse*; and although doubtless there might have been some very worthy persons, even amongst those she met behind the scenes, and in the green room of the Opera, still, to her prejudiced mind, all seemed alike, bold, licentious and depraved.

The dread, the real terror, with which Gabrielli inspired her, made her, at length, passively submit to place herself under the hands of Myrtila, in order that she might be attired for this new occasion of exhibition, the peculiar nature of which Rosalie scarcely gave herself the trouble to inquire; every thing, she supposed, must be equally odious.

After the signora had completed her task, she surveyed what she had done with evident satisfaction.

"Now," she said, "only look at yourself, and if you are not delighted, you must be even more senseless, than I before imagined."

Rosalie lifted her weary eyes to the glass, and, perhaps, she even might have been a little surprised by what she saw reflected there—for it was remarked that she looked again for a moment fixedly at her own lovely self, and then turned away with a deep sigh.

Myrtila then desired her to go down and show herself to her mother, whilst she made her own toilette.

Poor Mrs. Elton, (for so I always called her) told me that she was lying as usual on the sofa, and her eyes were closed. On hearing some one enter, she opened them.

"I believe I had been half asleep," she said "and when I beheld the lovely object that stood before me, I could still have imagined my senses were deceived by a dream; for what a vision of beauty I looked upon! I had never before seen Rosalie thus attired. Her dress was of the most becoming description, and dis-

played, to the utmost perfection, the fine form of my beautiful child; and then her countenance, as she stood for one moment, with a sort of conscious sense of her own loveliness, and the effect she thought it would produce on me! Oh, how sweet was the half smile upon her lips, which, however, had more of sadness in it, than pleasure! Her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes—oh! Mr. Leslie, cannot you imagine their expression, when she raised them half smiling to look at me, and then with that sweet virgin air of modesty so peculiar to herself, cast them down? I was rapt in admiration, and foolish as it may appear to you, I believe, whilst I contemplated this poor girl, the pride and pleasure which swelled in my heart, made me happier for a few short moments than I have been for years; but it did not last long, like all enjoyments derived from outward circumstances, the sun-beam soon passed, and the black cloud overshadowed the fair prospect. I thought of her perilous situation, of the dangers, which on all sides would encompass her, and the remembrance that it was I—wretched, deluded creature who had led her into the snare—who had dragged her from the smooth path that was before her, into the thorny road which leads to destruction. I gazed on her until tears blinded my vision, and then, in all the misery of a broken heart, I turned my head upon my pillow, there to shed the bitter drops of repentance, while Rosalie seated herself to watch over me.”

Poor miserable woman! how could I answer her, when I felt too strong the wretched truth of all she said; how could I even bid her take comfort, when I saw so little to be derived from Rosalie’s situation? I could only pity her, as I really did, from the bottom of my heart, and tell her that my prayers were constant to the throne of mercy that the poor child might be defended by aid, such as we could not afford her. I besought her also to pray, and tried to enforce upon her mind, that by casting all her cares, her sins, her sorrows upon Him, who alone careth truly for us, she

might hope submissively for pardon and peace for herself, and protection for her innocent child.

What else had I to say? I could not reproach the dying woman. Her heart was softened and improved by the trial of deep adversity, and at least there was joy in thinking, that whilst time was stealing on, with a silent and rapid pace, and death would soon claim her as his own, and place her beyond the reach of hope or pardon, her sighs of penitence breathed in secret, and tears, shed unheeded by human eye, would plead for her in the sight of Him whose blessed attributes, are mercy and forgiveness. But this is a sad and long digression from the subject I had commenced. My readers must forgive me if I tell my story in my own old fashioned style. I find that if I check my thoughts and prevent their flowing in their natural hum-drum manner, I do not get on so well;—my memory fails and I grow confused.

I left Rosalie just introduced into the drawing-room of Sir Francis Somerville. Her feelings, upon that occasion, were very varied. As she entered the hall, the numerous servants, the lights, the air of the establishment altogether, struck her with the recollection of the past. She had seen nothing like it since she left Belmont House, and it came over her like a dream of by-gone days, when all that met her eyes of comfort, elegance and magnificence, was familiar to her. She experienced a kind of relief in witnessing this, and a feeling of security pervaded her mind as she ascended the stairs. Every thing around had a home-like feeling to her, at least, she felt she was about to be ushered into the presence—as in her innocence she imagined—of respectability. This could not be the abode of any of the Italians—the professors, towards whom she had so strong an antipathy.

Still, however, her heart beat with timidity—with shrinking dread, as she proceeded, and found herself about to be presented to the inmates of the mansion. But at the door she was met by Sir Francis, who with a manner that was fascination itself, and which ne-

ver appeared to such advantage, as when addressing a young and beautiful woman, accosted her, and with the most respectful attention, led her to a seat. When she, at length, took courage to turn her eyes upon him, the impression he made was most favourable; for she saw before her, one of the handsomest men in London, possessing an air that at once proclaimed his aristocratic position in society; and there was that indescribable something, in his appearance, which recalled thoughts connected with the treasured secrets of her heart.

Could there be a slight recollection, on her part, of having seen him before? or might it have been a family likeness between Sir Francis and his cousins of the Belmont family? His mother was a sister of Lord Belmont, therefore the resemblance might very naturally have existed. However, let the charm be what it may, which attracted Rosalie, true it was she felt soothed, and although her eyes sought the ground with a tenacity that was tantalizing to him, who coveted a glance from those beautiful orbs, still her heart beat with less painful throbbing.

Her answers to his polite questions were scarcely audible; but Sir Francis was for a few moments perfectly satisfied with his position, for he was feasting upon the perfection of her loveliness. Had poor Rosalie detected even with her most perfect innocence, the impassioned gaze that was riveted upon her, the security and comfort she then experienced, must instantly have vanished. Terrified—defenceless—where could she, sweet lamb, have flown for refuge?

But she saw nothing to discompose her; as I have before said, her eyes were fixed on the carpet; when, however, she was obliged to raise them to answer a servant who handed her coffee, she gave a furtive glance around the apartment, in the newly awakened hope—of what! she herself scarcely knew.

Perhaps it partook of the idea, that she might recognise some friendly countenance, amongst the persons who she was aware were in the room. Arturo

perchance was there, and then the train of thought induced by the appearance of Sir Francis suggested to her the image of Lord Henry.

But no—as with a searching look, her eye quickly travelled from face to face, she viewed with sickening disgust, only some professional men and women, amongst them, *Mademoiselle Fanny* the *ci-devant* Fanny Gibbs of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden; and as Rosalie caught a sight of her exposed bust, and bold looking demeanour, she shuddered; her eyes were again about to seek refuge on the ground, when they happened to fall upon the full length pictures of immorality, which, in every direction, presented themselves. The loud vulgar laugh and coarse jest, met her startled ear; she felt, at once, she was in that style of society, she instinctively abhorred. She turned round, and looked stedfastly into the countenance of Sir Francis, and it was with an expression which said as plainly as words could have conveyed, “Good Heaven! what is all this? where am I—are you too like those I so much fear and dislike, or will you take pity on me and protect me?”

Sir Francis silently watched the workings of this beautiful face; but Rosalie at length spoke, and said in a rapid manner. “Are you the master of this house?”

“Yes, fair one,” he replied in the blandest tones, “and believe me when I declare, that not only every thing it contains, but that I, the monarch of all you survey, am at your command, anxious to do your will. Say only the word—every wish you express shall be obeyed.”

“Had I the power to command,” answered Rosalie most haughtily, “I should order a carriage to take me hence immediately—from those people—from this house,” and as she spoke there was a flush on her cheek, and a majesty that seemed to pervade her whole bearing, which daunted even Sir Francis.

“It must be acting,” he thought, “but it is the finest and most true to nature I ever beheld.”

He answered, "I regret Signora Rosalie, that I have been unfortunate in not selecting the society you like; but I imagined the ladies and gentlemen who are here, might have been amongst your friends—acquaintances at least."

"Friends!" she exclaimed; "however," she added quickly as she saw Fanny approaching from an inner room, "you cannot be quite the same as the others. There is an indescribable something about you, unlike those with whom I have been in the habit of associating lately, so for mercy's sake! spare me, if possible, from insult, from what I feel I must meet with here—alone—without one creature, to whom I can fly for refuge."

"Rely upon me, loveliest of the lovely!" but Rosalie looked displeased.

"Call me Miss Elton. Sir, that is my name."

"Well then, Miss Elton, hear me; on my knees I could thank you for bestowing on me so honoured a privilege. I will indeed protect you—none of these persons shall annoy you, confide only in me, for here I swear that I am ready to pledge myself for ever your most devoted slave."

Rosalie opened her large eyes and gazed wildly on him. His manner, as well as his words, puzzled her but after a moment's pause she said more calmly, "Thank you; then, if you please, remain by my side during the time I stay in this house."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE exultation with which Sir Francis heard these flattering words will be readily imagined. His plans were then, indeed, proceeding with a degree of success, which even exceeded the extent of his hopes.

Already he fancied he had found favour in the sight of this beautiful creature; who, he quickly discovered, possessed a mind of no common description. Indeed, he soon became completely puzzled by her; how was it possible he thought, his own laxity of morals added to the general opinion he entertained of the weakness and frailty of the fair sex, inflaming his reflections, that a girl, who had lived so long under the protection of such a profligate as Gabrielli, could remain untainted in mind? It was quite out of the question.

He did not know that innate modesty and purity derived from nature, and refined by education, wraps its possessor in its impenetrable folds, and shield her from the taint of contamination, like the thorns which grow about the rose, proving at once its ornament and safeguard.

Still, however, he saw she was totally unlike any one he had met before. Oh, should he then be the first to touch her heart, to warm it with those feelings which might not as yet have been excited; what triumph!

The evening was passing to Rosalie with a degree of enjoyment she could scarcely have imagined possible. Sir Francis's manner towards her was all that respect and attention could convey. He devoted him-

self solely to her amusement, showing an anxiety to please and gratify her, which could not fail to be flattering to a heart, little accustomed to meet with so much kindness and consideration.

Sir Francis speedily discovered that she could converse upon other topics save those of frivolity and nonsense: indeed, that she was new and strange to the ordinary routine of agreeable nothings, with which he was wont to regale the ears of his fair friends. He found she was awake upon subjects of less trifling import. She could talk of Italy with good taste; she appreciated, and was pleased with many of the specimens of the scientific curiosities with which the room abounded; fain would she have looked at the really beautiful pictures that adorned the apartment, but they were mingled with those, so little calculated for the eye of a modest female, that she shrunk, abashed, from the contemplation.

Sir Francis, perceiving the genuine feeling of discomfort they occasioned her, with a sudden impulse, whispered to one of the footmen, who was attending with refreshments—"Go, this instant, and tell Jennings, that before he announces supper, the picture over the chimney-piece, the one opposite, and that which hangs over the door, must be all taken down;—now see that this is done immediately."

The man stared, but said—"Yes Sir Francis;" however, it appears, the order could not be credited by the pompous butler, who, presently made his *entrée* into the drawing-room, and bowing profoundly, begged to speak a word to his master.

"What the devil do you want?" exclaimed the impatient Baronet, who was just preparing to lead Rosalie to the piano-forte.

"If you please, Sir Francis, I did not quite understand the order you gave to Thomas."

"Then, you must be confoundedly stupid; so go down, and have it executed;" and he turned from the discomfited *maître d'hôtel*, and again approached Rosalie, all fascination and softness.

She had received a summons, from Gabrielli, to attend him at the piano-forte, and although Sir Francis, doing violence to his own wishes, entreated that she would not sing unless she really did not dislike it, she stood too greatly in awe of her tyrant, for a moment to dare to disobey his commands. Gabrielli accompanied her, in a song from the opera, in which she was to appear on the following Saturday.

She had been so long accustomed to display her talent, indeed, from her earliest and happiest days, it had been so familiar to her, that it was the cause of no annoyance; perhaps, even, in the present irritable state of her feelings, she would rather sing, than sit alone with her sad thoughts. Through that harmonious medium, she could pour forth her sentiments, her sorrows; many of the words blended with the woes she felt, and, as every note seemed to rise from the very inmost recesses of her heart, when the sufferings of which she sung appeared to be her own tale of sorrow, the effect she produced, may be faintly imagined when she pronounced the words—" *Infelice, per te speme più non v'è!*"

The thrilling sensation it made upon the sensibility of those who heard it, is scarcely to be credited. Sir Francis stood before the lovely *cantatrice*; his arms folded, like one entranced; his eyes were fixed upon her, and he really looked pale with emotion. The extraordinary animation of her countenance—the thrilling notes of her voice, which, although powerful, were of the most plaintive expression—almost told her own unhappy story.

True it is, the hitherto hardened man of the world felt, at this moment, as he had never felt before. It seemed as if a halo of innocence enveloped the poor girl, which, even he, daring profligate as he was, acknowledged to himself to be sacred. He felt his heart swell with a sensation very unusual to him. Could it be possible, that he looked upon beauty, for the first time, with a softened, a purified heart? for, whilst gazing on the interesting creature before

him, he was startled—ashamed. But, so it was; his eyes were filled with tears—eyes which had never, till now, been used but as slaves to his desires—which had only looked on loveliness with the withering blight of vice.

Whilst under the influence of the purest fascination, Sir Francis felt that his plans were falling to the ground. There was an indescribable manner about Rosalie, a genuine air of modesty, which appeared to have protected her, even from licentious thoughts;—a dignity in her innocence, which had the power of altering the course of the ideas, even of the profligate Sir Francis; and, if we could have read the thoughts that flew rapidly across his mind, they would have been in some such strain as this:—

“I wish I knew more about the girl: at this moment, I would not, for my life, let her perceive my intentions towards her. I can see, at a glance, that she is purity, itself; and, now I remember, she was brought up by those strict Belmonts, and I can trace in her some of their sentiments. I don’t doubt but that I have blundered the whole business. Fool! that I was! to bring her here with such a set about her. Her horror of them is unfeigned, and no wonder!—to think of her elegance—her refinement,—and look at them!” and his eye, at that instant, fell upon the blowsy, exposed Fanny; he could have gnashed his teeth, with disgust, at his own mismanagement.

“If she once begins to suspect me, it is all over with my hopes. I must, at least, endeavour to keep up her present opinion, that I am of a superior order to those, into whose society the poor little thing has been so unwittingly thrown. She clung to me for protection from them. I must find out more about her. Good Heavens! how lovely she is! and oh! that voice!—By Jove! she will be the mark at which all London will aim;—nothing like her has ever yet been seen!”

Thus soliloquized Sir Francis, who had, in a very short time, drank deep draughts of love, and was

beginning to work himself up into a state, nearly approaching to torture.

Rosalie ended her strain, and he was, in an instant, at her side, and his arm was, with *empressement*, offered to her. Supper being announced, he led her to the dining-room.

The repast was in character with the tone of luxury, which pervaded all the establishment; but, in these, days of gastronomic perfection, I will not attempt to describe it. It is easy to imagine, how *recherché* would be the banquet, prepared by one of the first French *artistes*, and where the wealth of the owner made every extravagant superfluity attainable.

It was highly enjoyed by most of the assembled guests, upon whom, however, with the exception of Templeton, the very epicurean delicacies of the feast were rather thrown away; for the greatest part, probably, valued eating more from the quantity, than the exquisite quality of the viands.

Notwithstanding, Champagne, and other choice wines flowed most freely and rapidly, under the direction of Templeton, who sat, in great dignity and exultation at the bottom of the table, and was desired to do the honours, by Sir Francis, who was too much engaged with Rosalie—tempting her delicate appetite with assiduous care, and overwhelming her with attentions—to regard any of the party.

Templeton was in his glory. There he sat, with his coat thrown back, displaying his gorgeous waistcoat, brooches and studs, his face more red than usual, from the exertions he was making to do the agreeable. He was “redolent of smiles,” as he glanced, from side to side, with patronising importance.

On his right sat Fanny; on his left a fat, good natured-looking Signora, and he was feeding them to their heart's content.

Certainly our friend Templeton was, at this moment, much happier than the lord of the feast, for his

was unmixed bliss. Sir Francis had whispered to him, "Do what you like, order as you please, Templeton, only don't bore me, and keep those d—d people as much out of my way as you can;" and the Baronet seated himself at his own board, with Rosalie by his side, and they were as totally apart from the others, as if they had been in a separate room.

They were both absorbed by their conversation, which was held in a low tone of voice. Sir Francis continued to make Rosalie talk, and at once gained her confidence by informing her that he was the nephew of Lady Belmont. The pleasure this information gave her, and the delightful surprise it occasioned was so great, that her reserve immediately gave way. She was in the presence of one who bore so near an affinity to her beloved friends—what comfort!

The chain which held her silent was loosened, and her answers to his numerous questions were given with unrestrained freedom. Soon he learned the short history of her life, the happiness she had enjoyed, and the abject misery of her present condition; her detestation of the profession she was forced, against her will, to embrace.

Sir Francis, however, soon discovered that the protecting eye of the Belmont family, still hovered over the poor girl; their hands were still ready to stretch forth to rescue, to relieve her; the identity of the old quiz with the shovel hat was made known to him; and every word she uttered, conveyed to him more thoroughly the conviction, that never before had he fixed his hopes on an object, so difficult to be obtained. The more impediments that crowded around this cherished scheme, the more did he feel certain his happiness was completely connected with his success; and, at length, when the party broke up, after he had carefully wrapped Rosalie in her shawl and handed her into his carriage, he returned to the drawing-room, and threw himself upon a sofa. It did not, however, appear that this action was induced by

weariness, for his eyes were bright and wide open. He seemed to meditate deeply.

Templeton, who had safely stowed Fanny in a coach with some of the other guests, returned, expecting to have some snug chat with his friend over the occurrences of the evening, but this gentleman waved him off in a very impatient tone of voice, "I am tired, Templeton, so don't torment me."

"Why surely you are not going to bed at this time of night; it is only half past twelve; your cab is at the door."

"Well then," replied Sir Francis, "you had better get into it, and take yourself off."

"Very well, *mon cher*," said the good natured puppy, who certainly must have been of the spaniel breed, so little he minded being kicked; and he was about to depart, when his friend called out, "I say Templeton, you may come to breakfast here to-morrow." With this soothing unction Templeton took advantage of the cab, and left the baronet to his own reflections.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"How weak, how foolish you must think me, dearest Gertrude! said Lady Constance, as seated by her friend on a sofa in the dressing-room, she leant her head upon her shoulder to conceal the tears, which were still trickling down her cheeks; "but, perhaps," she continued, "if you could understand all that was going forward here," and she pressed her hand to her heart, "you would forgive this demonstration of feelings, which spring from the depth of that affection, which fills my heart even to bursting."

Gertrude fondly pressed the fair speaker to her bosom, and then said, "Believe me, dearest, I enter most fully into your every sentiment; I know what it is to love, and I am quite aware how quick-sighted, how sensitive it renders its enslaved victim; creating miseries in every look and action of the one beloved, which falls short of the overwhelming tide of warm attachment, which it almost selfishly expects in return for the devotion of one's own devoted heart."

"Then you will agree with me, Gertrude, with your knowledge of my love for your brother, that there was something in Fitz-Ernest's manner this morning, which was very chilling; oh! I shudder when I think of it. An ice bolt striking upon my heart, is the only language, in which I can describe the effect it had upon me; but do you know, dear friend, it is not the first time, the appalling idea has crossed my terrified imagination, that I am not altogether the model your brother had formed for himself, as the *beau ideal* of what he admires in woman; and oh Gertrude! do not despise me when I confess,"

and here she rose and advanced towards the mantel-piece, upon which she leant her elbow, and with her hand shaded her face, "when I say, that I am so mean, so little minded as to feel a sensation, I fear too closely allied to the despicable passion of jealousy. This Rosalie? speak, tell me at once," and she looked round and fixed her eyes upon the countenance of her friend, in the most imploring manner; "be candid with me, but oh! do not keep me in suspense, have you any reason to believe that your brother feels for her, more than the common interest you all seem to entertain in so extraordinary a degree towards that unfortunate girl. Unfortunate did I say? at this moment," she added, with the deepest sigh, "I should call her thrice blessed! for I am but too truly convinced, that she occupies the thoughts of Fitz-Ernest, that his heart is so interested in her cause, so kindly open to her distresses, that willingly would I, the high-born, prosperous, favoured child of fortune, ah! *how* gladly would I give up all those worldly distinctions, and become poor and destitute, so that I might only be regarded by him with pity, that feeling which is so near akin to the most tender love."

"Poor Rosalie!" exclaimed Gertrude with sadness in her accents, "as Mr. Leslie often says, she seems to have been indeed born to trouble; for not only herself, but others suffer on her account. There is certainly something very extraordinary in the nature of the feeling which draws us towards her, and believe me when I say, I think Fitz-Ernest only participates in it as we have done; he has not seen her for some years, Mr. Leslie strictly forbade our meeting until after she has made her first sacrifice, poor girl! until the dreaded next Saturday is past; therefore he only remembers Rosalie as the little pet of his boyish days, for she was always his special protégée. My other brothers used sometimes to love to torment her, to make her occasionally the subject of their mischievous sport. Fitz-Ernest was ever older than his years, and he never entered into any plan which di-

rected itself in the slightest degree towards hurting the feelings of any living being; far less those of a poor defenceless little girl, who was dependant—at least, not quite in the same grade as ourselves. Rosalie at all times sought his protection, defied the other tormenting children, if she could only nestle herself closely by the side of her champion Fitz-Ernest. It was, of course, with great interest that he watched her daily improvement; and her sweetness, her wild playfulness, certainly endeared her much to my brother, as well as to us all.”

Constance still sighed, and looked most sad. “You cannot wonder,” continued Gertrude, “that Fitz-Ernest still feels much solicitude on her account; particularly as he knows she is suffering greatly. Her present position is melancholy to contemplate, for it is one of shrinking distaste to a girl of her very acute sensibility. You cannot imagine how nervous I feel at the idea of Saturday: but I must go and see the darling girl make her debut, although I am sure the sight of Rosalie, pursuing a course from which I know her very soul revolts, will nearly break my heart; but still, by a sort of fascination, I am drawn towards the spot, and go I must. Understanding my own feelings, I can so well account for those of Fitz-Ernest.”

“Yes—but—” still persisted Constance, “I hear so much of her excessive beauty, that my heart mis-gives me when I look at myself in this glass, and see reflected, an image which possesses so few attractions!”

“Oh fie, Constance!” said Gertrude, casting a reproachful glance at her friend, “this is not like yourself. I should almost imagine that you were resorting to a subterfuge, unworthy of the dignity of Constance Delaval—unlike your own candid straight forward character; that you were endeavouring to extract an empty compliment.”

“No Gertrude; heaven knows! that is not my aim. If you were to look into my heart, at least, you would find that I was unfeignedly humble, notwithstanding

all my other imperfections; but I will allow, I am unamiable to-day; you would, however, compassionate me, if you could conceive the sort of shock my heart has sustained; the averted eye, the cold abstracted manner, which this morning tortured my very soul, told a tale that the feelings of Fitz-Ernest were less warmly attached than mine. But do not mistake my sentiments, I am not mean or ungenerous. I feel truly for this poor sweet girl, although perchance, she may for a time have driven me from the best and largest place in Fitz-Ernest's memory; but oh! how gladly would I show to him that I am as ready as he is, to stretch forth my hands to her succour—to her assistance, to bestow upon her a sister's kindness; any sacrifice would I make to befriend her—save one," and here again she sighed mournfully. "I cannot allow her any portion of the *heart* of Fitz-Ernest; unless I possess it solely, existence will cease to be a blessing to me:"

"Dearest Constance," exclaimed Gertrude, as she drew towards her, and warmly embraced the fair girl. "You speak sweetly, but sadly, much more so than the occasion calls forth. I am not a very able adviser on such a subject, but I should say, with my knowledge of Fitz-Ernest, that I think it would delight him, if you were to express these kind feelings towards Rosalie—if you would, as it were, go hand and hand with him in this work of charity and take part in the discussions we so constantly have upon the subject. I certainly will now confess, that the idea has sometimes struck me, that you, who are generally so alive to every thing which we regard with interest, have been more silent and less ardent upon this, our favourite and most anxious theme. Oh Constance," exclaimed Gertrude, turning very red, as a thought appeared to flash across her mind, "I could almost scold you, thus to misconstrue Fitz-Ernest. Do you not know that we are rather a proud race? and will not that conviction be sufficient to assure you on one point? Do you think, for a moment, that Fitz-

Ernest, my brother, would ever forget who he is ; what is his destiny ? The heir of an illustrious family, which it is his prerogative by birth-right to sustain !”

Whilst thus speaking, the high-born girl looked indeed as if all the pride of ancestry was hovering round her.

“ Well, so be it,” cried Constance meekly, “ heaven grant indeed, that I am making miseries for myself, and that these dreadful thoughts are but fabrics of my too susceptible brain.” And casting her dove-like eyes to heaven, as if for support, she continued, “ But oh ; what agony to love, as I do, and to feel even for an instant the dread of unrequited affection ;—it is torture too great to be imagined, save by the unfortunate wretch who has endured it.”

The conversation was here interrupted. A servant knocked at the door, to say that the carriage was waiting for Lady Constance, and the two friends, with much tenderness, parted.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN Fitz-Ernest left me, after our warm discussion, I was for a time—I may say overcome, almost to weakness. My love for the young Belmonts was so great, and certainly the feeling I entertain for Fitz-Ernest so far stronger than every other, that it was a mixture of disappointment, vexation and sorrow, which struggled in my breast.

Fitz-Ernest had ever appeared until this unhappy morning, so far above all others, so noble, so kind! Never before had I seen him give way to any ebullition of unwarrantable temper. I sat for some time in a very dejected mood, and could have exclaimed, from the bitterness of my thoughts, “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?”

And when I recollected all the numerous perfections of my young friend, I sighed to think that I had discovered one human weakness in so mortifying a manner. But it was not very long that sentiments, even bordering upon anger, against Fitz-Ernest, could hold their place in my too loving heart. Soon I found myself making excuses for him; my resentment turning into the old channel of my admiration, lost itself in that most overwhelming tide; and I began to argue with myself in some such manner as this, “After all, it is but natural, and certainly noble in the youth; I must not think so seriously of this, his first and only dereliction from the most affectionate respect. I am persuaded his mind is upright, and is it not a beautiful

trait thus to see this young man, whom prosperity might well have rendered selfish, anxious to befriend the oppressed. He knows that poor Rosalie is suffering, and the test of true friendship is constancy in the hour of danger—support in the season of distress. These are indeed its important duties—its most sacred claims. Why should I have given a second motive to Fitz-Ernest's intentions? Shame upon my own sinful thoughts! His views were certainly rather visionary, but no doubt they were virtuous." And so I mused, until I had fairly shifted the blame upon my own shoulders, accusing myself of unjustly condemning my long cherished favourite.

Just when I had begun to feel a little soothed, and calmed, the door slowly opened, and Arturo appeared, looking paler and more dejected than usual. Really, when he stood before me thus, the very picture of woe, I experienced, for the first time, perhaps, something of a feeling of vexation, and almost groaned aloud rather than sighed, when I thought to myself—"Well, am I never to be at rest? Here is another of my self-created cares."

However, poor fellow! it was only for a moment that I felt thus churlish; it would have been impossible to have looked upon his beautiful countenance—so wan—so dejected—and not have been melted. I bade him sit down, and, for a brief space, we were both silent. I saw that he was struggling with some communication which he was desirous to make, but he seemed to lack the energy to speak. "Well, Arturo," I, at length said, "how fares it with you?"

"Not well, not well, Signor mio," he answered, in an agitated tone of voice; "I am wretched, as usual."

And, indeed, he looked what he uttered, for never was a being so altered as this poor youth, since the day I first saw his joyous careless countenance at Naples.

"But, what is it, dear Arturo?" I said, "you, surely, are wrong thus to give way to despondency. Did

you not promise me that you would pray for comfort—that you would look above for strengthening aid, to support you through a world, to you so distasteful—so full of trouble?”

“Yes, Signor,” replied the youth, and the deep pathos of his voice, aided by his own musical language, made the words he uttered sound still more eloquent; “truly, I do pray. I do endeavour to look for consolation at the throne of the Almighty, but there, even, I meet with discouragement; for, the Supreme Being, to whom I address myself, is a great—an awful being! his nature is to us unknown; he dwells in the secret places of eternity, and is surrounded by clouds and darkness. We hear his tremendous voice in the thunder! and in every commotion of the elements, we behold the irresistible law of his power! To such a being, I, a poor, insignificant worm, can only look with dismay. I contemplate him, with awful and mysterious reverence, which overpowers my confidence and trust.” And, as he spoke, his countenance wore, more than ever, the expression of the most profound despondency.

“Dearest Arturo,” I said, as I warmly pressed his hand, which was cold and damp from nervousness; “do not, I beseech you, view, what ought to be so great a solace to you, with such an eye of distrust. Look not upon the Almighty as surrounded by his sterner attributes, but think of him as a God of the tenderest compassion and pity, and regarding him, thus, as a father, as a friend, it will prove a shade and softening to the awful greatness of the divinity. It will bring down His goodness to the level of your own conception, and fit it to be the object of your humble hope. When we hear the voice of tenderness conveyed by His own words, our hearts must be comforted. Distrust and dismay no longer stand before us. We can draw near Him as our Father in Heaven, before whom we may, in humble confidence, pour forth our every sorrow; and his compassion, depend upon it, my dear young friend, imparts a kind regard

to the circumstances of the unhappy; and extends itself to our moral and spiritual concerns, in a like manner to our natural and external distresses."

"But it is not for myself I wish to supplicate the mercy of heaven, dear Signor; you know it is for *her* that I would weary heaven with my prayers."

"Arturo," I answered, and I looked reproachfully at the ardent boy; "your own soul is your first concern, and, remember, you are committing a sin, in thus creating for yourself an idol, which you set above every other consideration—even your own eternal salvation. My dear young friend," I continued, with much gravity, "by disquieting yourself so much upon the subject of Rosalie, you are encumbering yourself with a load which is not yours to bear, nor have you strength to support it; and, perhaps, the miseries you foresee, may never be suffered to arrive.—The hand of mercy may either turn into a different course, the black cloud that appears to carry the storm, or, even, should it burst over the devoted head, the same compassionate hand, may allow it to bring under its dark wing some secret consolation: be assured, the great rule, both of religion and wisdom, is to do our duty, and leave the issue to heaven; waiting, with submission, for what Providence shall see fit to appoint."

"But, Signor," vehemently exclaimed Arturo, starting from his seat, whilst a flash of colour passing over his pale cheeks, lighted his dark eye with fearful splendour, "would you have me tamely wait, and see destruction bursting upon the head of Rosalie?—But you know not what happened last night, or you could not be thus tranquil."

"Tell me what!" I cried, terrified by his words and gestures.

He continued, in a rapid manner—"There is a man—an Italian, who lodges near me; he came into my room this morning; he knows—has seen, how I adore Rosalie; his heart is kind, and he pities me. He told me, and my blood froze in my veins as he spoke, and

my very heart ceased its pulsations; he told me, that demon, Gabrielli, who would sell, without a moment's hesitation, his own soul for gold, had taken Rosalie, last night, to the house of a profligate young nobleman, who is desperately enamoured of her beauty. He, and the fiend Myrtilla, were bribed to do this deed; my informer knows this to be a fact, for he overheard the whole of the negotiation, which occurred after a rehearsal at the Opera-house. The victim was adorned, and led to the infernal sacrifice, and there her charms were gazed upon by the eye of vice; she was brought into contact with persons whose characters are tainted. What can be the result of all this?" and, with frantic violence, he continued—"And would you have me wait patiently, and abide the consequence?—No! rather than see that virgin purity sullied by communication with those wretches, my hand shall be stretched forth to rescue her—no matter in what manner. I would do any thing to save her, although by the deed I were lost! But, now, I have come to you in the first instance; you must lose no time in going to her, and then you may ascertain all from her own lips. It distracts me, when I think of what she must have endured. I, who know her so well."

Whilst he was speaking, I had already risen, and was hastily preparing to set out, my impatience now almost equalling that of Arturo.

CHAPTER XXX.

I soon reached the abode of Rosalie, and was ushered into her presence. I expected to find her in a state of depression, and dreaded what I should have to encounter; but, to my great surprise, on my entrance she rose from the piano-forte, before which she was seated—not, however, until I had heard a few clear, cheerful notes; and when she came forward to greet me, a bright smile, such as I now rarely saw, was upon her lips.

And oh! it was a relief to me, for Arturo's communication had agitated me dreadfully, and I came prepared for a scene of distress.

"My child," I exclaimed, somewhat hastily, "I am so glad to find you thus; Arturo has been with me, and from what he told me, I was uncomfortable about you."

"What could he have said?" she replied; "I have scarcely seen him for some days past, and nothing new had then occurred."

"But, Rosalie, where were you last night?"

"I was just going to tell you, dear Mr. Leslie; but you need not look so concerned for me; I do not know when I passed so agreeable an evening. I was taken to the house of Sir Francis Somerville. Oh! at first how I disliked and dreaded the idea of it! I was wretched, anticipating I know not what evil, but I was most delightfully surprised, for the evening passed with somewhat of pleasure. First of all I must tell you, that Sir Francis is Lord Belmont's nephew—cousin to my darling friends; this knowledge at once in-

spired me with ease and tranquillity, for he is, in some respects, like them—polished and gentlemanlike—winning in his manners. Oh! such a contrast to those with whom I have lately associated; and he was so kind and attentive to me. It appeared as if he wished to shield me, from all the horrid people who surrounded me; would you believe it, dear sir, I almost enjoyed the evening I so much dreaded. But why do you look so grave, I have longed so to see you, to tell you this; but you do not seem to enter into it; how is it; tell me, my kind friend?"

"I am always delighted my dear child," I replied, "to see a smile upon your countenance." I paused, scarcely knowing how to proceed or what to say. It seemed cruel, at that moment, to chase away the transient gleam of cheerfulness, by the dark surmises which it was, perhaps, my duty to present to her mind. I hesitated, for was it wise to suggest to her, fears, which after all might have no firmer foundation, than the excited imagination of the young Italian? so I led her on to speak more fully of the events of the last evening, and she seemed well pleased to dwell upon them.

She gave me a full account of all she had seen; the beautiful specimens of art, the collection of antiques, of choice engravings, the books that had attracted her notice, and which Sir Francis had promised to lend her, she expatiated upon the elegance of the house; every thing reminding her so strongly of past days.

She then told me how kindly Sir Francis had conversed with her, how attentive he had been, guarding her from all the rest of the company, and assiduously endeavouring to amuse and reassure her. And more she would have said, but we were interrupted by the entrance of Gabrielli, who came in, evidently with a prying air of suspicion. He certainly seemed relieved by seeing the countenance of Rosalie, the expression of which he tolerably well understood. He knew that, at least, she had not been complaining, and an expres-

sion of satisfaction crossed his odious features. He almost immediately began to speak of the morrow, the day so dreaded of Rosalie's appearance.

It appeared as if for a short time she had forgotten the fearful subject, for the words of the Italian seemed to fall with a startling effect upon her ear; she shuddered and shaded her face with both her hands. Presently she turned towards Gabrielli, and I saw that even in that short time, her countenance had totally changed its expression, and she said in that quick manner which I always hated to hear, "Signor, after to-morrow, I shall be at liberty to see my friends; you have promised this—remember!" and the word *Ricordate* was pronounced in a tone of voice, which thrilled through all my veins.

Gabrielli, with a sardonic smile answered, "Your friends, Rosalie, may not wish to hold farther communion with one of your profession, which they seem to regard with such disgust; you had better at once give them up. Why should you so weakly cling to them? There is a much more brilliant and agreeable field open to you, than having to play the humble companion, to the haughty stiff-necked aristocracy of this proud country."

Rosalie's eyes actually flashed fire. She arose, and stood exactly before Gabrielli, and fixing a most piercing look upon him, said in a low distinct tone, "Tell me at once, is it your intention to debar me from seeing my beloved friends? Answer me this question."

The man was evidently quailing beneath her glance, but he replied, "I can see no use in such an intercourse; to a person situated as you are, it will only unsettle your ideas, and unfit you for your profession. What can an actress have in common with the lords and ladies of the land? Recollect, now you belong to me—are my property, and me alone you must obey."

"Cruel! cruel!" exclaimed the poor girl, wringing her hands; and then a burst of tears succeeded. But in another moment, she had brushed away the pearly

drops, and with a calmness which surprised me, thus spoke; "Signor Gabrielli, I know that I am, in a measure, in your power, but even you are aware that there is a spirit within me, which when once roused, is fierce and intractable—which will not bend to insult or oppression. I am certainly weaker, than when first your cruelty brought my spirit of defiance into action; my energies are well nigh exhausted, but still, the fire is not extinguished, the last flash will blaze as brightly if you rouse the flame, and its effects may be equally destructive to your views. I can endure much, if so I will it, but *you* are also in *my* power. I will sing, if it is my pleasure; if not, my voice is mute—silent as the grave, promise that you will allow me liberty of action, and I will do your behest to the utmost of my abilities. I will now solemnly bind myself to you until I am of the age of twenty-one, if I may make my own conditions, but if not, you may abide by the consequences."

Whilst she spoke, there was a kind of majesty—of command, about her, which appeared to daunt even the ruffian, although he bit his lips with impotent rage, and then said, with a voice which trembled with smothered anger, "What folly—what childish impertinence is this? Do you flatter yourself, because this old man is present, that I will endure to be insulted by a wayward girl?"

"Rosalie," I at length interposed, dreading the effect of the agitation, which I saw increasing to a frightful pitch, "for Heaven's sake, calm yourself! to what advantage can all this excitement tend?—Continue, my child, to bow meekly to your fate."

"Mr. Leslie," she answered, "what I am now doing is of vital importance to my future existence; without I succeed, I cannot endure my weary life. Signor Gabrielli," she again said, "listen to me, for the last time. It is my wish to have free access to Lord Belmont's family. If you will, in writing, sign your consent, I will also, in the same manner, pledge myself to be your slave, as far as my musical talents are con-

cerned, until I am twenty-one. Three long years!" she ejaculated, as if thinking aloud, and she sighed bitterly; but then added, with a wild, ringing laugh—"but they will soon be over!—oh! how soon! Signor, do you hear me?" she continued, for Gabrielli had walked to a window, where he stood, averting a countenance upon which revenge and hatred were most plainly depicted.

He continued silent, and, during this interval, I tried, in as few words as possible, to dissuade her from making so rash a promise; but she waved me off, impatiently, saying—"Oh! do not—do not prevent me; I know that it is the only course to pursue. Signor Gabrielli, if you do not accede to my proposal, listen to the alternative—I will not sing at all. You may imprison me—starve me—may even strike me, as you have done before, but, still, I will remain—voiceless—senseless! You may drag me to the theatre, but it will be an automaton form!—I shall only hurl disgrace upon you;—but, accede to my simple proposition—sign what I shall write, and I, in my turn, will prove true and honourable to my engagement. I will do my best—and you know what that is."

Gabrielli was actually livid with rage; but he saw the determination of Rosalie's countenance, therefore, seizing a pen, he said: in a voice of suppressed fury—"Presumptuous girl! what am I to write?"

She dictated, in a clear, distinct tone, a document which she made him sign; and I, also, as a witness, was desired by her to annex my signature. She then sat down, and wrote a solemn pledge for her own services, which was executed in the same manner. The moment this was completed, Gabrielli rushed from the room, with ferocious looks and muttered imprecations; and relieved did I feel, when the slammed door shut him out from our presence, and then this fearful scene closed.

Rosalie sank exhausted and almost fainting upon the sofa, and anxious as I was to unburden my mind

of the subject which brought me thither, and which Arturo's fears, as well as my own had magnified into one of deep and vital importance, I was obliged to defer saying any thing which might excite her already overwrought feelings.



CHAPTER XXXI.

THE dreaded day of Rosalie's *debut* had now arrived; and it was with much nervousness that I looked forward to its close. As I sat over my solitary meal, my thoughts were entirely engrossed by this one most interesting subject. Poor girl! hers was a really melancholy fate.

To another, the brilliant career that presented itself, might have been viewed under a very different aspect; but she was born with a temperament so totally unfitted to meet the circumstances she was destined to encounter. Her feelings were all so, unfortunately, high-wrought.

But why did I give way to sorrowful murmurs? It would have been better had I endeavoured to calm my apprehensions for her, not by impotent regrets, but by remembering that human affairs are not left to roll on according to mere chance, but, even the humblest, the hand of Providence directs; however, it is but too often that an unaccountable mixture of light and darkness presents itself to us, when we attempt to trace the course of events. The ray of illumination that we had followed for awhile, suddenly forsakes us, and our senses are filled with confusion and disorder.

Perhaps, at this moment, I was thinking, with a degree of dissatisfaction, which I ought not to have encouraged, upon her untoward fate. My human understanding could only discern some broken parts of

the divine plan—some few links of that chain, which, by secret connexions binds together the destinies of man. All had been arranged by the just and tender hand of her Heavenly Father.

If the secrets of Providence were laid open to us short-sighted mortals—if the justice of heaven was, in its every step, made manifest to our view—this present state would no longer answer the purpose of discipline and trial; so we must learn to bear, with patience, whatever is imposed upon us, though, indeed, the reward of our constancy may be far distant. Resignation must seal up our lips; in silence, must we drop our tears, and adore, even while we mourn.

It was a bright sunny morning, and its influence, as I walked towards Rosalie's abode, improved my spirits. But I felt very anxious when I knocked at the door. I found her in the sitting-room, and Myrtilla was in the act of trying on the dress that she was to wear that evening. I glanced at her countenance, and, at first, was reassured, for it did not appear sad; on the contrary, her eyes were bright; but, when I looked again, there was a deep red spot on either cheek, which proved to me, too truly, that her present state was one of excitement.

She looked very lovely in the flowing robes of white muslin, which accorded so well with her own youth and simplicity. The part she was that night to perform, was the short, but affecting, one of "Nina." She had chosen this character herself; and, with that degree of pertinacity which accompanied some of her actions, and to which, even Gabrielli was obliged, at times, to submit, she had determined to make her *début* in no other opera. The fact is, she had seen it acted in Italy, and it had made a deep impression on her fancy. Gabrielli would have preferred her coming forth in some more elaborate part, in which her splendid voice and extraordinary talent might have had greater scope; but Rosalie was obstinate, and he was forced, in this instance, to give way. And, indeed, how could she have chosen better? Most

truly did she identify the affecting character she had to portray! and those who saw her, can never forget the impression which she made upon their feelings.

As for me, even now in the darkness of the night, the vision of the beautiful maniac appears before my imagination. I see the white garments of the distracted Nina, hanging in classic folds of drapery around the graceful form; the long dark hair flowing in loose tresses over her fair bosom. Even the flowers she held in her hand appear fresh and bright.

My readers must make allowances for me; there are periods when these recollections return strongly to my mind, when I feel for a while overwhelmed—unmanned; when human feelings throw their darkened veil over my purer and better thoughts, and for a moment, only a brief, an agonizing moment, I sinfully forget her far more glorious, transcendent happiness, and remember alone that sweet young girl, who was so good, so beautiful, in all her beauty, her gentle attractions mouldering in the dark cold grave, and I, a useless, miserable old man, left to fill a place on earth, which would so much more delightfully have been occupied by one so young, so talented and excellent! But cease, vain heart, to murmur; how is it that I, who have since endured so much, the rack-ing pains of a torturing disease, increased by the feebleness of declining years; I who have had also to bow beneath many a stroke of wayward fortune, I trust with pious resignation, how is it that still the pang of memory is ever equally keen upon this one subject; the wound always fresh and bleeding.

“ I cannot but remember such things were,
And were most dear to me,”

and with the remembrance, my tears gush forth, and I weep as if the grief was but of yesterday. But again I will crave the pardon of my gentle reader, and with an effort to control my painful emotions, proceed with my sorrowful tale.

A short time after my entrance, Rosalie retired with Myrtille to resume her dress. In a few minutes she returned. She did not make any allusion to the evening, but began at once to show me some books she had received from Sir Francis, asking me to look at them, and to tell her whether I approved of them before she commenced their perusal. She also mentioned that he had called the day before, whilst she was at the theatre, which she said, she regretted.

"Rosalie," I exclaimed, and there was a degree of sternness in my tone, for she started and coloured, "you must never admit Sir Francis, or any other such recent acquaintance; my dear child," I continued, "in your profession, you cannot be too careful, too circumspect."

"Of that I am fully aware, dear Mr. Leslie," she answered, "and I had only one reason for making this exception in favour of Sir Francis,—his near relationship to Lord Belmont's family."

"But Rosalie," I answered, "I grieve to be obliged to say, that the ties of blood, in this instance, create but little similarity between the cousins. Sir Francis is a young man of notoriously libertine character."

Rosalie looked shocked and amazed; but I thought it my duty to proceed, at once, as I had begun.

"You must not receive any favour from his hands—return his books—his presents, if he presumes to make you any; treat his advances with the most frigid coldness, and as you value your fair fame, be firm in refusing to go again to his house; however difficult may be the task for you to achieve, still I think, by your noble determination, you have convinced Gabrielli that you can be resolute upon those points which you consider of vital importance. You will, my poor child, be exposed to a fiery ordeal, your pure mind cannot comprehend the nature of the snares that will, in every direction, encompass you; it would be folly in me not to be explicit, therefore, Rosalie, you must remember that you have great ta-

lents, and much personal beauty; your public position will throw you at once into the midst of temptations of every kind; adulation will be poured into your ear; every eye will be upon you, but ever keep in mind that vice, under the most insinuating aspect, walks abroad in this wicked world. 'Tis your destiny to be an actress; on the stage you must act the part given to you; there you may be the impassioned heroine, whether it be love, revenge or hate, you wish to portray; but when the scene is over, you must return to what you have hitherto been in such society, which believe me, I have witnessed with admiration and respect—the cold—even the forbidding woman; for virtue has often to borrow some of the sterner attributes, to maintain its dignity."

Rosalie sighed very deeply, and I, fearful of agitating her farther, at such a moment, changed the subject to one which I thought would cheer her.

"To-morrow, Rosalie, there will, indeed, be joy for you, I shall take you to Belmont House."

These words, however, did not appear to produce the enlivening effect, I hoped they would have done. Her countenance was very dejected, and large tears fell slowly from her eyes.

"Mr. Leslie," she said, "after this night's exhibition—after having seen me once publicly assume the character of an actress, will they welcome me as their former Rosalie? No, it is quite impossible. I can define more clearly the feelings of others than you may imagine; but I will go with you to-morrow; once more will I behold all their loved countenances—feast my weary, longing eyes again upon those I so revere—so love. Perhaps, indeed, it may be for the last time, for God is my judge, that I am not one who would wish to intrude. I shall be explicit with Lady Belmont, she who is truth and kindness itself, will be equally candid with me. She shall set the limits to my future intercourse with the family; and with all her benevolence and equity, I know she has strict notions, with regard to the claims of rank and sta-

tion. She shall seal my fate, and to her determination I will bow without repining. If she says, 'Rosalie, we shall never cease to love you and watch over you, but it is not consistent with the dignity of your former companions, to associate with an actress, situated as you unfortunately are, living with those whose characters I cannot but condemn;' then will I meekly submit. It will only hasten the breaking of this heart, which already is well nigh broken; and I will take a last farewell of those, who, as long as I exist, I must always love, but never—never, will I force myself upon them again."

In vain did I assure her that I had Lady Belmont's sanction for presenting her again to her young friends; she continued to shake her head, and look incredulous.

"Well, I shall go and judge for myself," she persisted in saying, and the conversation was here interrupted, by the entrance of others.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MANY hearts beat high with expectation, in regard to the events of the evening. In Belmont House there was but one feeling, and that was most intense interest and nervous anxiety. As for Lady Gertrude, she made herself almost ill, so much had she thought and felt upon the subject.

"Alandale," she said to her affianced Lord, as he sat by her side, his eyes fixed admiringly on the fine play of her animated countenance, "you will at last see our poor Rosalie, of whom you have heard so much. Now you must promise me, that you will enlist yourself in her cause, and be as warm a friend—an advocate—to her as I am. I have my views with regard to this poor girl, and you must faithfully declare your readiness to assist me, in every proposition that I may make."

Lord Alandale was not tardy in satisfying his lovely betrothed. Any thing—every thing in his power; she had only to command.

"I shall go to the Opera to-night; but I must not be seen," she continued: "it would quite undererve Rosalie, were she to see us. Are you to be there, Henry?" she said to her brother, who had just entered the room.

"What can possess you to ask me such a question?" the young man replied. "Do you think any power on earth would keep me away?"

"Then recollect, Henry, you must hide yourself;

for Heaven's sake, do nothing to add to the agitation the poor girl must feel on such an occasion. How she will be able to get through it at all, I can hardly imagine; and Fitz-Ernest, he will be there; I suppose he will accompany Constance?"

"No, he has a box of his own, and I am to go with him."

"But of course, he will join Constance during the evening, and you will come to us."

"I don't know," returned Lord Henry; "but really, just now, I cannot think of sisters or any body else; so, my dear Gertrude, you must be content with your own property, Alandale; Geraldine, will, no doubt, pick up some cavalier, and as for my mother, of course the Marquis will be there, to hear the little siren who used formerly to enchant him, though then her talents and perfections were only in embryo. But, good by, I really cannot stay. I feel that I am not able, for a moment, to be quiet this morning. I am all restlessness and impatience. I must endeavour to get rid of the day as well as I can; so adieu," and with these words, he ran off.

* * * * *

It was not only in Belmont House, that curiosity and impatience were running high with regard to Rosalie's appearance; great expectations had been raised in the minds of the public. Gabrielli was a deserved favourite in the musical world, as his base voice was certainly superb; therefore, from his pupil and daughter, as such she was supposed by all to be, much was expected. From every lip you heard the same words, "Shall you be at the Opera to-night?" and it was curious to listen to the only name passing from every individual, whether it were young or old, that of the lord or the commoner.

Not a box was to be had; not a stall disengaged. So much anxiety had not been excited for years, for every one seemed to have heard vivid descriptions of the beauty, as well as of the talent of the new *debut*

ante, and her extreme youth, rendered the interest still more intense. *La Rosalia* appeared destined to be the goddess of the season, even before her perfections had been seen.

And Sir Francis Somerville—did he calmly await the termination of this day?

Vainly had he endeavoured again to catch even a passing glance of Rosalie's countenance. The day after she had been to his house, he rose from his almost sleepless pillow, more than ever enamoured of her beauty, and there was something even beyond her loveliness, that had so completely enthralled his senses.

He saw at once that she was no common character—not merely the beautiful image, to be adored solely for its outward charms—that she had mind to enhance them, and not only one that was cultivated, but of a most peculiar character: and Sir Francis experienced so many mingled feelings when he thought upon her, that he scarcely could define whether disappointment or pleasure pervaded his ideas, in having discovered that she was so superior; that his first views with regard to her appeared completely foiled.

She was, indeed, no easy conquest. Besides, it was but too evident, that notwithstanding her extraordinary position, she was guarded with the watchfulness of Cerberus. The Belmonts, whom he always feared and disliked, were her staunch and watchful friends, and then I—what anathemas did he not shower upon me? for I, with my shovel hat, gray locks, and clerical appearance, threw a degree of respectability over the whole affair, that was indeed a stumbling-block to all his plans and wishes.

Templeton this morning found his friend in a very bad humour, and on accosting him in his usual strain, was thrown back considerably by the petulant replies of his friend and patron.

“However, after having recruited his strength and spirits by a copious meal, he ventured to say: “Really, Somerville, I’ve been thinking that after all, that Sig-

nora Rosalie is nothing so wonderful. She is certainly the most extraordinary young woman I ever saw, and, upon my honour, she gives herself most cursed airs. I shall never forget the look of horror she cast on all your company last night; and really when poor Fanny approached her, if she had been a wild beast, instead of one of the sweetest girls in London, she could not have looked more terrified. For my part, I cannot understand these airs and graces, and I can tell you, she is no great favourite with the Opera people. Bless me! in my opinion, there is no comparison between her and Fanny; and upon my word I cannot help thinking that you are disappointed, for you look so deuced grave this morning, my dear fellow."

Sir Francis did not vouchsafe to interrupt this long speech: but if Templeton had looked at his countenance, he would have made his harangue much shorter, for a dark storm was gathering upon the brow of the Baronet, and at length he spoke in a tone and manner so sternly severe that Templeton trembled to his very heart's core.

"Templeton," he said, "I shall never forgive myself, for allowing you to take any part in the events of last night; however, I shall derive one advantage from it; it will teach me a useful lesson, that is, to avoid in future having any thing to do with such a blundering idiot as yourself. You need not think that I shall ever henceforward request your services. To think—and the very idea almost maddens me—that I should, with my eyes wide open, have committed such a deed of folly. To have brought her into the presence of such a herd! Fanny indeed! no wonder that she should shrink from her, with shivering disgust. I have marred my own views, by having any thing to do with such a fool as yourself. So, in future, Templeton, remember, you may continue to eat my dinners, and for the sake of old companionship, I will remain your friend; but at your peril—presume not to mention the name of that young lady, except with

the most profound respect; as for pronouncing it coupled with that of Fanny, if you wish to preserve any terms with me, you must avoid henceforth taking so great a liberty."

Templeton looked very red, frightened and angry, and endeavoured to bluster out a few deprecatory sentences; but Sir Francis interrupted him, and in a cold, calm manner, began to speak upon some trivial subject.

Templeton did not linger in Hill Street as he was wont to do. He was too glad to take his departure; and as he slowly, and with a very crest-fallen appearance, paced his steps towards his club, he was musing deeply and with mortified feelings on the extraordinary mood of his patron. He had long been his companion—his catspaw—his butt—but never had he seen him thus; and the discomfited dandy began to think, that Sir Francis was either a little wrong in his head, or that, by some means or another, the reign of his favour with the rich and ever-generous Baronet was nearly over.

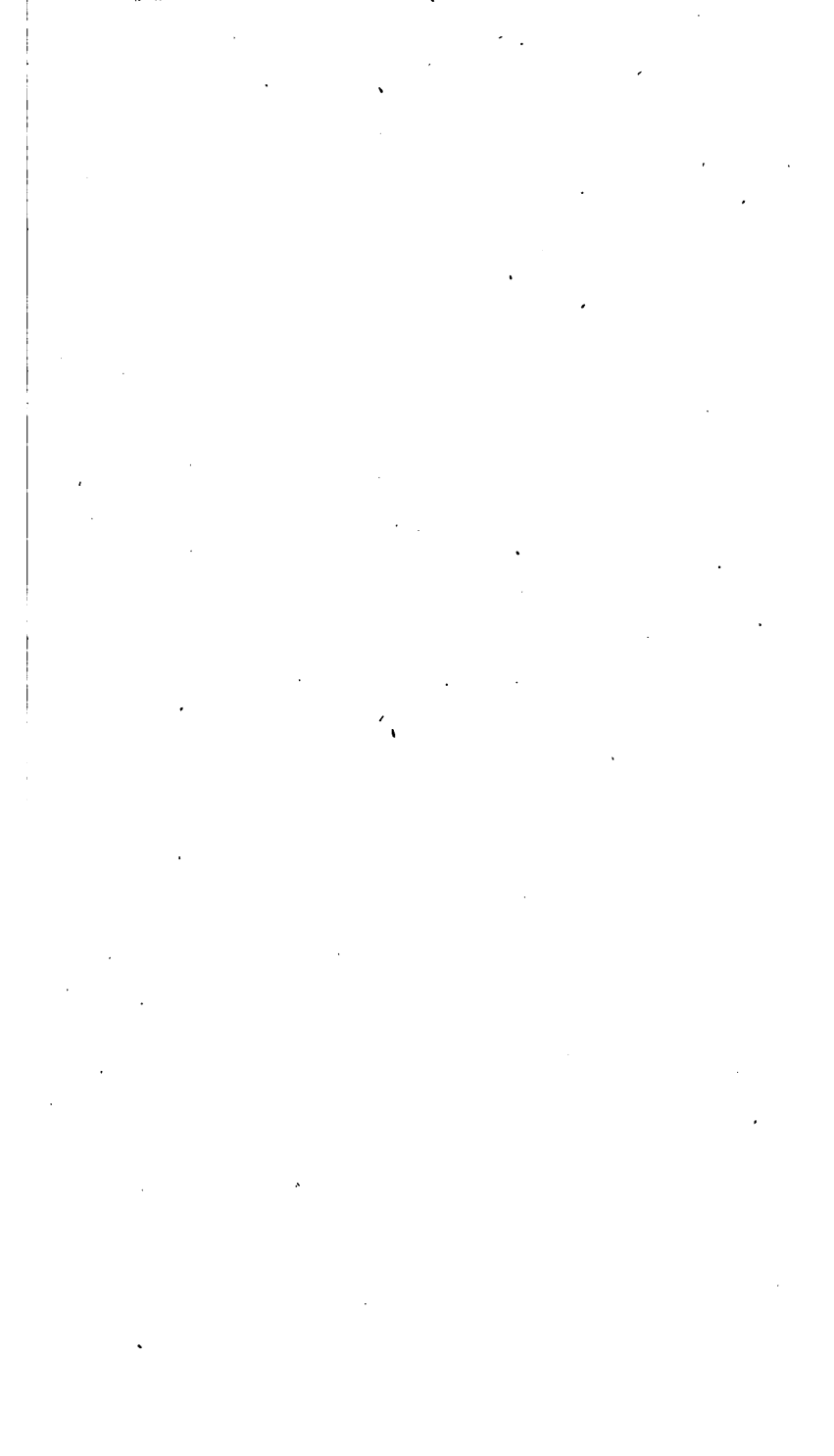
Sir Francis, after the disappearance of Templeton, remained for some time in deep meditation. The longer he pondered on the effect that Rosalie had produced upon him, the more he became bewildered by the crowd of new ideas and schemes, which rose in quick succession. With all his vices, taste and refinement were much blended in his associations; and the classic beauty of Rosalie, the freshness of her cultivated mind, and great talents, had raised her very far above the level at which he had expected to find her. His views were all hasty and impetuous. "She was not, indeed, born for her present station," he mentally ejaculated. "Superior she is to any woman I have ever before beheld—even to those I meet with in the highest grade. She would adorn any station!"

And then he again mused for some short space. After a time, he got up, and was for some moments

busied in looking over his collection of books ; and selecting some, he rang the bell.

"Order my cab in an hour," he said to the servant who attended. He had determined to call upon Rosalie, and be himself the bearer of the books, which he intended to lend her. But this wish, my readers have before heard was frustrated. Rosalie was really not at home when he first attempted to visit her. He next endeavoured to find Gabrielli, whose good wishes he was most anxious to conciliate, but he was too much engaged with the various arrangements of his vocation, to be accessible.

Sir Francis was in a most unenviable state of mind, and how truly does this illustrate the fact that the indulged passions of a man having once obtained an unlimited sway, trample him under their very feet. And who can be happy, let their outward condition be ever so splendid, whose imperious wishes detain them at their call, and whose only enjoyments spring from the consolations of those of the world? No, believe it, no chains bind so hard, no fetters hang so heavy, as those which fasten the corrupted heart to the hopes of this deceitful world.



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